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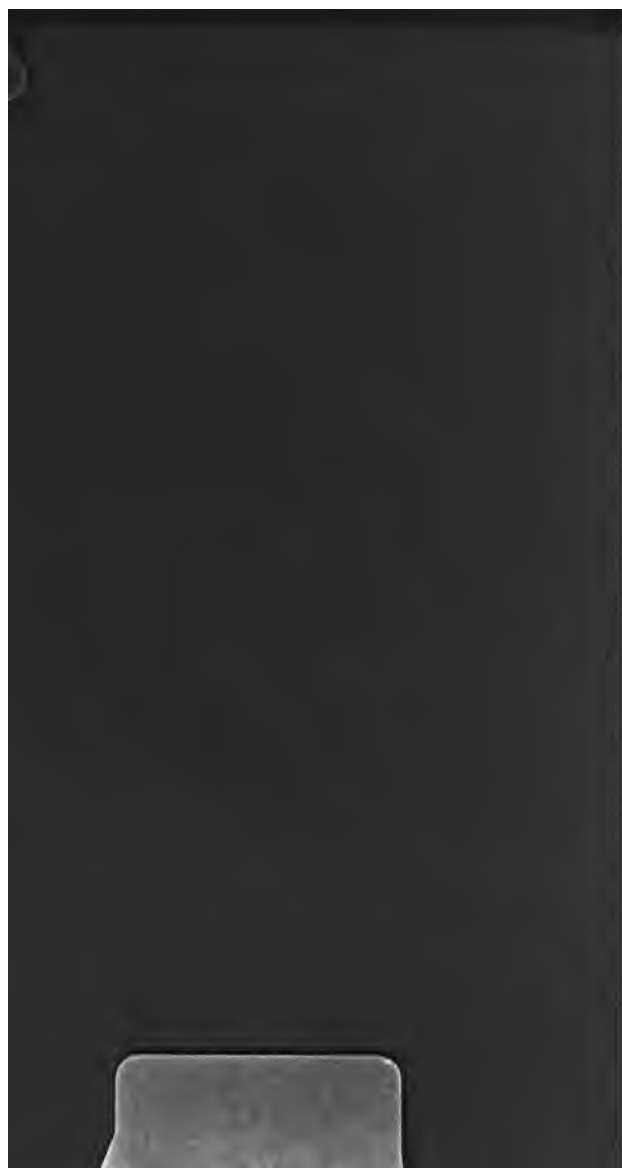
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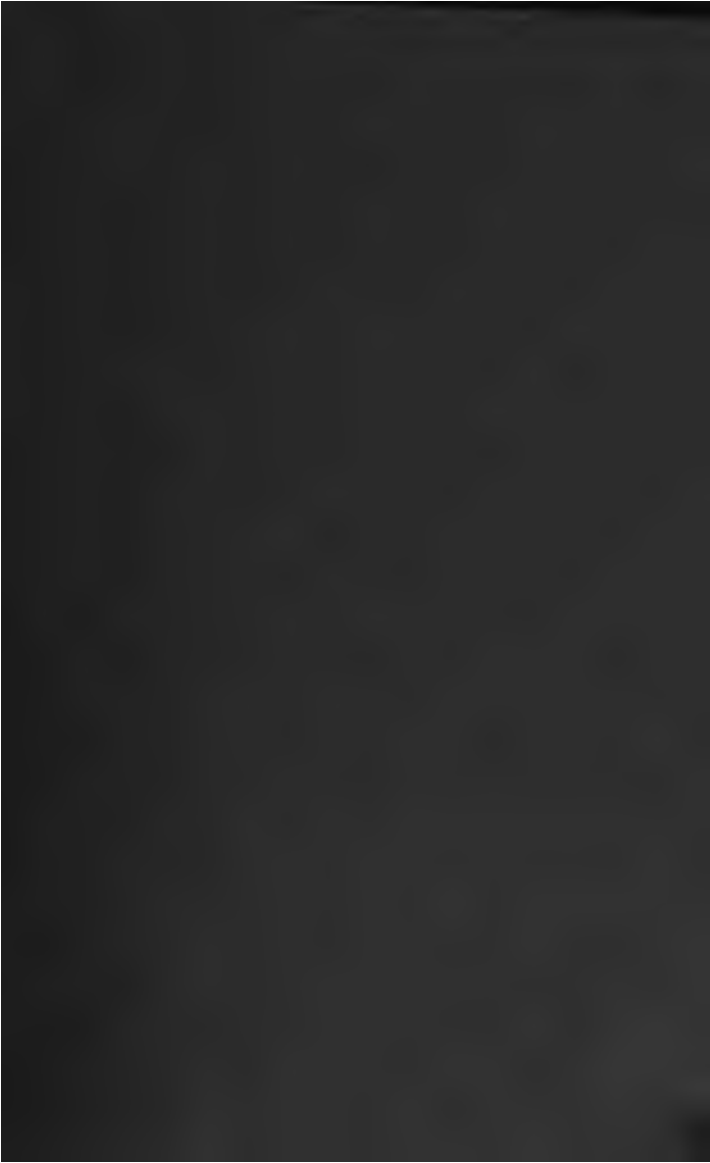
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THOUGHTS

SUNSHINE IN SORROW.

SECOND SERIES.

BY

ELLEN ST. JOHN HUNT.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHORESS.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THE very kind reception of the first series of "THOUGHTS OF SUNSHINE IN SORROW," and the proofs afforded that "the Master," to whose disciples the work was offered as "a cup of cold water," had accepted the offering, induced the authoress to prepare for publication a second series of papers on similar subjects.

This "labour of love" was performed during the last few months of her life, in the midst of constantly-increasing weakness. And ere the final revision could be made, her right hand had forgotten its cunning and her heart had ceased to beat. Her sincere desire to render further service to her Lord on earth may, however, yet be accomplished, now that

she herself serves Him "day and night in His temple." A knowledge of these circumstances will, we do not doubt, avert minute criticism, and ensure a kind welcome from all who are in sympathy with the authoress, and especially from those "who are in any trouble."

MEMOIR.

WE are well aware that however kindly a stranger may regard the following brief memorials of one of God's "hidden ones," he cannot enter into the feelings of admiration and affection which are awakened by personal friendship. A remark on the ways of God or the preciousness of Christ, uttered by an unknown Christian, may strike us as true and rather beautiful, but may not produce any special impression on our minds. But if the very same remark has been made by one of our own friends, to whom we have been drawn by the "bonds of love," it comes home to us with more of the power its truth possesses. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Many expressions of devout thought which seem commonplace are not really so; but casual listeners or readers, not seeing or feeling half the truth that is in them, wonder why they should be thought worthy of preservation. Yet the narrative of the simplest Christian life may be very helpful to some who, in spiritual

seclusion, are glad to learn how a "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" has "walked with God," and has enjoyed "days of heaven upon the earth." Hence we should not feel an apology needed if at greater length we narrated the history of the inner life of the authoress of "Thoughts of Sunshine in Sorrow." We venture to think that no experienced Christian would deem the record of her opinions and feelings commonplace. Her intimate friends look back upon her friendship as a priceless privilege; they unfeignedly confess it to be one of the good and perfect gifts which come down from above from "the Father of lights."

"Her memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night."

But the chief object of this brief memoir is to illustrate her profound admiration and intense love for "the word of God," and the influence it exerted on the growth of her Christian character. In these days "of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy," it is refreshing to meet with any new illustration of the truth that the word of God is an incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever. By the grace of God she was what she was, but the means

by which she attained her remarkable saintliness of character, (we use the term advisedly,) was chiefly the patient and prayerful study of the Holy Scriptures, which were especially endeared to her by the lengthened discipline her Heavenly Father was pleased to assign. The three qualifications for a successful preacher, mentioned by Luther—prayer, study, and trials—met, in a remarkable degree, in her experience.

Ellen St. John Hunt was born at Norwich, November 27th, 1837. Nurtured in a pious home, the youngest of a most affectionate family, she had “a goodly heritage.” From her earliest days she showed signs of such native talent as would have marked her as no ordinary person, even if the Divine Spirit had not diffused His consecrating influence over her gifted mind. At four years of age she could read well, and her greatest delight was in the Bible. In a paper contributed to the *Bible Class Magazine*, entitled “My three Bibles,” she gives the following account of the power exerted on her young mind by the first Bible she possessed:—

“I was a very little girl when the ancient-looking volume found its way into my hands and heart—not much over four years old. Perhaps that is the reason why the Bible has always been so dear, never rivalled by any of the new books

which have since taken their own place in my attention and affection. Let the Bible be the first love of a little child's opening intelligence, and it will probably take such deep hold there, that nothing can displace it. * * * Of course it was for the sake of its word-pictures and life-like descriptions that I thus began to love the holy book; but I cannot think that amusement was the only or the chief fruit of this early introduction to its green pastures. My firm belief is that the gentle teaching Spirit is ever ready to accompany the word, and has His own method of applying its grand and sanctifying truths to all who read it, provided only they bring to the study a child's openness of heart. And when the reader is in very deed a little child, that good Spirit will not fail to make the perusal subserve His gracious purpose of revealing 'the wisdom of God' unto babes. I know, for my own part, that the interested study of these Bible stories must be noted as the source of a real and most influential belief in God as watching, punishing, rewarding, helping, guiding, delivering, *loving* all His creatures; and not only so, but as fixing His attention on particular individuals, knowing their names, regarding their actions, hearing their prayers, and bringing even their thoughts to light. Too young to ask 'How can this be?' my infant mind believed the

fact, and received an impression of God's personal and real interest in my own child-life, which I look back upon through long succeeding years as the first principle of a religious experience, which has, by the grace of God, grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. Long before my grandmother's Bible gave place to a new and well-bound volume, however, I had learned to love more than its stories. For it must not be supposed that my religious education was limited to the intercourse with 'the Book' to which I refer above. Kind parental instructions, together with the excellent training of a loving infant-school teacher, had not been vainly expended. My growing intelligence and excitable temperament, and the strong desire to know more of God, led me to find interest and enjoyment in Psalms, and Prophets, and Epistles too. Indeed I loved the whole of the Book so dearly, that when it was first proposed to give the old way-worn treasure to a poor family which had none, even the promise of a new and beautiful copy could not take off the feeling of sacrifice with which I parted from it, nor stay the tears when next I turned my eyes to the empty corner where it used to be."

It will not be a matter of surprise that such a child should, in early days, enjoy the "full assurance of faith" in Christ Jesus. We can hardly

seek for the beginning of such a Christian life; certainly not for the beginning of a work of God in her heart. When only six years old she knew what real prayer was. In a letter to her mother, written at the age of twelve, she refers to her pastor—the honored and beloved Rev. John Alexander—and says, “Give my kind love to him and tell him that, about three years ago, he addressed our school upon the words, ‘Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth?’ I then, if you remember, took down the heads of his address, and that not only on paper, but on the tablet of my heart, whence they have never been erased.” And at the same time she says, “I have been for a long time in private professing to follow my Saviour.” A minister, with whom she had conversation on personal religion, writes to her mother, “I was astonished and delighted to find her a decided Christian, with an experience of the plague of her own heart, and of the preciousness of the Saviour, equal to many a child of God of many years’ standing in the church of Christ. * * * Her views are remarkably clear as to the way of salvation through Christ and Him alone, and her heart is full of love to the Saviour.” Shortly afterwards, when just thirteen years old, she was welcomed into the Independent church, meeting at

Princes' Street Chapel, Norwich, under Mr. Alexander's pastoral care.

An interesting trace of Ellen Hunt's growth in grace, and of the influence of the word of God on her heart, during the few years that follow, is found in the paper from which we have already quoted.

"I was just twelve years old when my mother placed in my hands, as her new year's gift, a bible whose handsome binding and clear type rendered it, in outward appearance at least, a striking contrast to the cherished companion of earlier childhood. It was not the gilded purple of its cover, however, nor the large print which a loving mother had chosen as best fitted for her tender-eyed child, which made the gift so attractive and so welcome. For 'the Book' now came to me as the messenger of Him whom I had learned to 'trust in with all my heart' as the guide of my youth, the Father of my orphanage, the Saviour of the sin-stricken soul which had but lately lost its sorrow at the cross of Calvary. Ah, a deeper, holier, truer love greeted the possession of this my second bible than had ever been cherished for its venerable predecessor.

* * * It was with me at boarding school, and bears witness, by many a margin-mark, of days when conflict with the outer 'world in miniature' seemed all too hard for the lately enlisted soldier of Jesus Christ; when temptations, such as school

girls know, assailed the 'little Puritan,' and shook her integrity once and again. 'Reproof' and 'correction' were not wanting, faithful monitor; nor, when the weeping penitent, learning from the holy page, sent up the publican's prayer, didst thou fail to unfold the Divine response, 'I have seen thy ways and will heal thee; I will lead thee also, and restore comforts unto thee.'"

Thus during the later years of her childhood and her youth, she continued to receive with meekness "the engrafted word." And it proved its own Divine power. It was "able to save her soul." In the true Christian sense of the word, she was being "saved" day by day; saved from the power of sin, from "this present evil world," and, especially, from that complacent satisfaction with a low standard of Christian attainments, which contents too many who profess to be followers of Christ, but are willing to follow very far off. Instead of settling down in "a comfortable Christianity," as Adolph Monod calls it, she gave "all diligence" to add to her faith "virtue," and all the Christian graces enumerated by the apostle. A quiet, steady growth in the Divine life was the result. Her affection to her Master prompted to labours of love in the Sunday School and elsewhere, and she shared the experience of other faithful workers; in watering others she was watered herself also.

The following extracts from letters to one of her most intimate friends, written during her seventeenth year, will illustrate this period of her life:—

“—— sends her kind love to you. We think of searching for proofs together, on various subjects, for the purpose of increasing our knowledge of Scripture. Will you join us? By comparing our proofs we may throw light upon them, for two persons will seldom find exactly the same texts.”

“It is with earnest gratitude that I add, I never loved my Saviour more than I do now. Dear C., I have felt and feared that my love to Him has grown cold; I have cried unto Him, mourning over my wanderings; and He has shown me that He loves me, and stirred up the decaying embers of my affection towards Him, enabling me to say with sincerity, I love Him *supremely*. Oh, dearest, when I speak of His love to others, I feel almost in raptures; when I think of His love in dying for me, my heart burns within me. I cannot grow tired of the subject.”

Writing after an illness, she says, “There was something in my illness which made me think it might be one from which I should not recover, and the question arose in my mind, ‘If I knew I must die in youth, should I be happy in the prospect?’ I had for some time indulged myself by thinking of happiness in future years, and looking forward,

as if with some certainty, to a career of useful exertion; and when I pressed this question upon my conscience, I felt as if I could not help wishing to live, and as if it would be an act of unkindness to take me away in the midst of my days. I was so unhappy when I found how my heart clung to earthly objects, and I could not rest while it remained so. I carried my rebelling heart to Him who could change it, and again and again prayed for a spirit of acquiescence, that I might lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His. And He did hear my request, and granted my prayer; and I was, and am enabled to say, 'Do with me Lord what seemeth good unto Thee.' I feel more than ever how I belong to Him, how much I owe to Him; and I re-dedicate my life and all I am and have to His service." It will be remembered this was the experience of a young Christian only sixteen years of age.

Ellen Hunt's health, which was never robust, often awakened anxiety in those who loved, and had already learned to prize her very highly. But it was not till her nineteenth year that a violent cold first caused the seeds of pulmonary disease to germinate and give threatenings of their fatal fruitage. A few weeks afterwards, she went to pay a visit to some friends at Thirsk; and while staying there, upwards of two hundred miles from

home, very severe hæmorrhage from the lungs brought her so near to death that it was feared she would never see her home again. But God had work for her to do before He called her to her rest. "During the first few weeks after my return home," she writes to her friends at Thirsk, "I was frequently attacked by pain and slight hæmorrhage, which obliged me to be very still and quiet; but in stillness and quietude I found One ever near, who was ready to converse, answering my silent aspirations with words which dropped like gentle rain on the mown grass, and filled my heart with 'perfect peace.' And in His own good time He raised me up, first by slow degrees, then more rapidly; so that after long absence I have been able to meet Him in the sanctuary, and sit at His table."

This extract may serve as a specimen of her experience, both outer and inner, during the next three years. At times the disease was so acute that very speedy death was feared. And when the most dangerous symptoms had subsided, periods of weakness followed, which, however, we can hardly say were long, for her strength was, at times, restored with a rapidity that led her friends to marvel at the mercy of the Lord, who can redeem our life from destruction, and can renew our youth.

Thus "the Husbandman" trained His fruitful branch, and "pruned it," that it might "bring forth more fruit." Our sainted friend had been no stranger to the discipline of bereavement. A father, a brother, and two sisters, had been removed from the family on earth to the family in heaven. These strokes, which fell on her at different periods of her life, from her fifth to her seventeenth years, had each a considerable influence on her spiritual history. The first, a sister's death, she says, she "came at length to look upon as a pledge that there really was a happy holy heaven, and a living loving Saviour." When her other sister, the most beloved companion of her childhood died, the desolating bereavement was one of the means her heavenly Father employed for drawing her affections to Himself, and leading her to so early and so entire a surrender of her youthful heart. But now, to the lessons she had learned in "the house of mourning," were added the teachings of the chamber of sickness. During all this time, her devout study of the word of God was her daily delight and refreshment. In speaking of the "second Bible," to which we have referred, she says, "Perhaps the association which renders this much-worn volume so peculiarly dear to me, so unlike every other Bible I ever handle, is that of its companionship during a long illness. Have

you known a season of great bodily and mental prostration, dear reader, when you could not bear the excitement of many visitors, but when the daily quiet hour spent at your bedside by one special friend, who always knew exactly the right thing to say to you, and exactly the right tone of voice to say it in, became almost the life of your life, the one bright beam which lightened the weary days? If you have, you know just what my precious book was to me, and just how I feel now, as the sight of its familiar cover and dear friendly lettering calls back that time of weakness, and constrains me to lay my hand on it and say, while my soul looks up to God, '*This is my comfort in my affliction; Thy word hath quickened me.*'"

Two or three extracts from her letters will further illustrate her joy in God's own book, and the use she made of it in seeking nutriment for her soul.

"I do indeed feel that the Word is the storehouse of comfort: those sweet texts you quoted are just what I want, and I am ever finding some which seem written for me. Deut. ii. 7 came home to me this morning; 'He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness!' Oh, how precious to think of that omnipresent One singling out an individual from the multitude, and marking his goings. To be an object of such attention

and interest seems an honour almost too great; yet such honour have all his saints."

"How wonderful it is that we can ever read the Holy Scriptures without being struck with their fulness and application to ourselves. How the simple fact that we do so read ought to assure us how entirely impossible it is for human intellect, unaided, to fathom the wisdom of God! How sacred is that book which requires a Divine interpreter; and what an honour is conferred upon men by this visible and tangible token that God is among them! The Bible and the Sabbath!—how adapted both are to human requirements. The 'evil generation' are ever 'seeking after a sign,' and God stoops to provide two great institutions, as monuments of His presence, and incitements to His service. When we think of the Creator thus stooping to the necessities of His creatures; and farther on, see Jesus washing His disciples' feet, how strikingly we understand the words, 'Whatsoever He seeth the Father do, that doeth the Son likewise.' Is it not delightful to recognise for ourselves the likeness, nay the oneness of the Father and the Son; and while saying confidently 'My Beloved is mine,' to hear Him assuring us 'He that hath the Son hath the Father also'? Oh, dear friend, what a *link* Jesus is, uniting the Divine and human, Deity and man, Creator and creature!

When one thinks on the 'height, and length, and breadth, and depth' of that grace by which the plan of salvation was drawn, and the love by which it was effected, does it not make one almost breathless? It seems like a great abyss where human thought is drowned. Oh, to be wholly absorbed in the boundless love of God!"

On one occasion, when expecting a speedy death, she writes, "Amidst rather increased bodily suffering, and occasional mental depression in anticipating the trial of parting, Jesus has shown me so much power and love that I can only accept the rod and rejoice in tribulation. That sublime passage at the close of 1 Thes. iv., has given me unspeakable comfort. Is it not wonderful?—the provision that is made in the revealed word for all our emergencies, present and future. If bowed down by affliction now, we read, 'Fear not; I *am* with thee.' If our future lot cause anxious forebodings, it is written 'I have made, and I *will* bear; even to old age I will carry you.' Should the idea of death awaken fear, we are reminded that Jesus has 'abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.' And if we seek some knowledge of unseen realities, we are pointed to 'good things' beyond conception. What a fulness there is in Jesus; and how His sufficiency seems to stretch out, till it almost goes beyond our need!"

During the years 1859—1862, our dear friend's health was, on the whole, better than it had been for some time, but it was evident that the fatal malady could only be checked, but never cured. Though often prostrated for a time, she soon rallied again, and displayed a strength and energy that were quite surprising. She could truly say "I am as a wonder unto many." Her large and intelligent Bible-class was her delight; and we trust other teachers may be encouraged by knowing that her fervent prayers have already been answered in the conversion of several of her youthful charge. Her pen was ever busy in conducting an extensive correspondence, which she constantly sought to turn to useful account. She occasionally wrote for periodicals, especially for the *Sunday School Teachers' Magazine*, where the contributions of "Ion" were sure to receive a hearty welcome. Her thirst for Biblical knowledge led her to commence the study of the Greek language, that she might enjoy the New Testament in its original tongue. Her visits to the suffering or the anxious were highly prized, and only "the day shall declare" her works and their result. During a season of unusual religious awakening in Norwich in 1861, when special services were held for inquirers, hundreds of whom flocked to "the Lecture Hall," Miss Hunt was to be found almost every

night, conversing with those who desired guidance; and by her most wise and affectionate counsels, seeking to win them to their Saviour. Of her habits of devotion we must say little. Seasons of communion with God are joys with which a stranger intermeddleth not. Those who knew her best bear witness that she never undertook any engagement without prayer, and that her seasons of devotion were often protracted. All who have had the privilege of kneeling in private by her side, and hearing her petitions, will never forget the mingling of profound reverence and child-like confidence, in both her words and tones. And every one who knows what the "life hid with Christ in God" is, will confess that without much and fervent prayer, such a life as hers could not have been maintained.

We have already applied the word "saintliness" to Miss Hunt's character. We believe all who were acquainted with her would justify us in so describing it. But it must not be imagined there was in it a particle of asceticism, or of that unnatural gravity which "the ignorance of foolish men" too often attributes to "the saints of the Most High." On the contrary, her joyousness and light-heartedness were remarkable. Her beaming face was a true index to the habitual state of her heart. Her mind was naturally sprightly, and

she did not neglect any gifts, even those of wit and humour, but felt that they might be used as talents lent by God, to bring smiles to the face of childhood, and cheerful thoughts to hearts immersed in the cares of life. She was not only a happy, but a *merry* young Christian. She could compose enigmas and humorous verses as readily as she could pour out her heart's longings in hymns of prayer or praise. A more attractive exhibition of Christianity we have never met with. She had an intense love for children, which could not fail to call forth a hearty response. She used to say that when walking in the street, she could never see a little child without trying to draw a smile from it. It was her delight to engage the affections of even the youngest for their best Friend. And all that was graceful and beautiful in her character was brightened, we might almost say glorified, by a spirit of entire consecration to the Redeemer. Her love to her Saviour was a sacred passion. There was a reality in her profession of dedication and submission to her own Master and Friend, that supplied a living comment on the words, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Writing to a friend, and expressing a regret that she did not always meet a response in even Christ-

ians' hearts, to her own strong feelings, she says, "When I speak of my 'Beloved,' I meet an assent, but it seems cold, and leads to no new explanation of His lovely character, no revival of first, warm, enthusiastic love, such as I look for from intercourse with Christian friends. And sometimes my heart, sad and heavy, asks, "Is it indeed impossible to be *in* the world and not *of* it?" I meet so few who feel as I do even, and fewer still who would lead me into higher communion; and those who are such are those who have seen most affliction, and who are most secluded from the outer world. Oh, often and often do I thank God that my way is thus hedged about, and that, as Adelaide Newton says, I am 'shut up to Jesus.'" To another friend she thus reveals the "joy unspeakable" of her communion with her Lord. "Oh, never was 'unspeakable' so truthfully employed as in regard to the gift of Jesus, in whom we rejoice, not only in our present fellowship, but in prospect of the heaven beyond. How utterly do words fail in describing, or thoughts in imagining that 'fulness of joy'! Yes, it is in store for *us*: we are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. Whence have we these things? Oh, the grace of God, how rich, how free! I am 'on the mount,' dear, my heart is singing a song of Zion, for I have caught a glimpse of the celestial city, and hear the new

song 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us with His own blood and made us kings and priests unto God'! Yes, my heart sings with them. Is my song carried up as incense, like the prayers of saints named in the Revelation? I think so.

'How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,
In hope of one that ne'er shall end.'"

Her conviction that responsibility to God extended to everything that could be used as a talent will be observed in the following extract from a note to a friend, who had presented her with a valuable book as a birthday present.

"For your kind and beautiful gift, dearest —, I thank you heartily; it will be, I trust, not only an ornament to my shelf, but a boon to others beside myself; for I am learning to love books more than ever, as the silent yet eloquent messengers of a dear and diffusive gospel. And the ability to lend them as a help to others thus becomes a rich and precious privilege, may be, even a *power* for good. Thank you, thank you, dear friend, for thus increasing my responsibilities, by adding to the talents which are to be put out at interest for Jesus."

Another feature in our dear friend's character was genuine humility. This can hardly be called a peculiarity, for it is common to all who have

made much progress in the Christian course. Her experience of the preciousness of Christ made her keenly sensitive to the evil she still saw lurking in her heart. Expressing to a friend her thankfulness for the confidence and affection she received, she adds,

“Ah, dear —, how in *all* things Jesus has the pre-eminence! My *friends* love me, not knowing the hidden evil; my *Friend* loves me, being ‘acquainted with all my ways.’ Oh, if you knew how naughty and wilful I have been lately, you would wonder, as I do, how He could bear with it all. He has seen me fretful and impatient beneath the rod, clinging tightly to life, earthly, unwilling that He should be glorified otherwise than in my way. All this and far more has He seen, yet not let me alone. Help me to praise; sing with double energy, for my voice is silenced just now, and it seems likely that I may never be able even to *speak* ‘aloud of His goodness,’ as in past years.

* * * During the last few weeks a deep shade has been over my mind, caused by the discovery of a strong will, where I had hoped ‘the Spirit of Christ’ had implanted acquiescence. How little do we know the deep-seatedness of our evil nature, until circumstances of peculiar trial bring it to light. This summer (1858) has witnessed a wonderful rallying of strength; so much so that I

have actually spent a fortnight with my dear mother and sister, at Yarmouth; have been able to attend 'the house' almost without intermission; and more than all have had opportunity and help to work a little actively for *Him*. All this has, as it were, formed a new tie to earth, and I was unwittingly cherishing a hope that it might yet be my 'Father's good pleasure' to let me live awhile and serve Him. And now lately such a change has taken place; disease is making such rapid progress, accompanied by frequent pain and much weakness, that the doctor confirms my own impression that, in all human probability, another material improvement may not be expected. Oh what a comfort it is that the thought of death brings with it no fear, no trembling. 'He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' 'I know that *my* Redeemer liveth.' *My* 'life is hid with Christ in God.' But, for a time, the desire for longer days here would rise in opposition to my appointed lot, and I felt so insincere in saying 'Thy will be done.' This was my grief. I could not understand how it was that after so long a training under so wise a Teacher, there could still lurk such waywardness. But I am quite happy now. It was of no use looking within and hoping for comfort there. I had no strength to rise above these sad feelings, and could only pray 'Conquer

me, O my God'! The other day I met with a text, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me.' So it was just what I wanted, and, laying hold of Jesus, all was right directly. How entirely one is dependent on God. Oh to be ever 'looking unto Jesus,' never suffering self to eclipse 'the Sun of Righteousness.' To-day, peace flows like a river; by-the-by 'my manna' is, 'All things shall live whither the river cometh.' May this life-giving stream flow more abundantly towards and through us, dear friend, and returning to its source, ever bear our hearts on its current."

But desire for life was not always uppermost in her mind. Writing in the summer of 1861, she says:

"Again an invalid; ten brief days of suffering have sufficed to pull down the strength which, for many months past, had seemed to be acquiring firmness and stability. From a season of delightful labour in the glorious 'revival' with which our city has been favoured, and in connection with which, I have, oh so much to praise God for, I retired for recreation to Reigate. But only a few days of activity succeeded my return, and here I am now, laid low by a Father's hand. Oh! how sweet that is—as *much* a Father in smiting as in binding up; as much a Father in withholding as in giving. I feel this to the full, and am not in the

least disposed to murmur. Life, love, labour invite to stay on earth; but my better, because sinless life is hid with Christ. His love is more to me, and mine to Him, than all the wealth of earth's affections, and though 'tis sweet indeed to labour for Him here, I long to be of those who, unwearied and undiverted, 'serve Him day and night in His temple.' "

At a still later period our lamented friend was "in a strait betwixt two." It was very affecting to talk with her on that dilemma which was so real, and yet, to herself, so painless; for to live was "Christ," and to die "gain." And it was a great joy to her friends when she was led to see it to be right to make the continuance of her life a matter of special prayer, that her labours of love which were deemed so "needful," might be prolonged.

The title of this little volume will inform those who were not already aware of the fact, that Miss Hunt had ventured before the public as an authoress. The origin of "Thoughts of Sunshine in Sorrow" is described, in her own graceful terms, in the preface.

"The following simple thoughts, originally penned to cheer the silent Sabbaths of a sick one whom Jesus loves, are offered to her companions in tribulation with the earnest prayer that, by the

blessing of God, they may prove 'a cup of cold water' to more of His afflicted 'little ones.'

'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.'

The 'sick one' referred to, was a Christian friend who, for years, was prevented from entering the house of God. Every Sunday morning, her gifted neighbour sent her a few "thoughts" on some passage of Scripture, suitable to one "in sorrow." As these accumulated she was urged to make a selection for publication. To this request she yielded. Those who were most familiar with her know that in this, as in everything else, she acted under the impression of the truth, "Ye are not your own." The book was an offering consecrated entirely to Christ. Referring to a delay which took place during its publication, she says, "I am not much concerned at the delay, feeling that, from first to last, the whole thing has been so thoroughly committed to God, as to leave no occasion for anxiety or worry." The kind welcome the volume met with exceeded her expectations, and filled her with gratitude and joy. To a friend she writes, "I am so glad you approve my little book. It

has, I trust, had the seal of God's own approval, in being made useful to some of its sick readers, two of whom have already gone to their final home. Is there not a solemn responsibility on those who write for the dying? I feel this deeply, and am most anxious that the character of all I write, (especially for those who are near death), should be 'Jesus only.' Her friends could not affect to be surprised at the reception and usefulness of the volume. The "cup of cold water," which she offered to her fellow-sufferers, was so truly given "in the name of a disciple," and in honour of the Lord, that she could "in no wise lose her reward."

We venture to think that the book is a very faithful reflection of the author's mind. Its chief excellence is the simple yet often striking views it presents of God's own word. There is no attempt to put forward what some would call "profound" or "original" views of truth. And yet there are some things in it that are really original. They are the result of an intelligent and very devout mind coming into close contact with "the true sayings of God." The writer had the open eye for the wondrous things of God's law. She looked deeply and long, till she saw for herself some new beauty in the sacred record. Others may have seen it before her, but she none the less

saw it for herself. And when she beheld it she rejoiced "as one that findeth great spoil." In what we may call the bye-ways of Scripture, by careful searching, she found many a fragrant flower, where hasty passers-by would only see a common herb. She turned up the lumps of ore which seem to many very earthy, and found sparkling gold on the under side. She could enter into the meaning of godly men of old in their words of enthusiastic admiration, which some are tempted to regard as hyperbolical. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth"! "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." This, as we have said, was one of the most marked features of her character. And we return to this subject again, from an earnest desire that all who read these lines may lay to heart this one lesson of her life. Though our minds may not be so gifted, yet we have in our hands that volume which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"; and we share the promise of the enlightening Spirit. We may be "mighty in the Scriptures"; we may so receive "the word of Christ" that it shall sink into our souls, and "dwell in us richly in all wisdom."

Now that so many excellent books on religious subjects are published, is there not a danger lest God's own book on religion should be neglected? Or if we constantly read it, do we in these busy days "*search* the Scriptures"? If we do not, can we wonder that our spiritual life is feeble, and depends more upon the excitement of what we may call religious stimulants, than upon "the sincere milk of the word"? If a single reader of this brief memoir is led to a more careful and prayerful study of God's word, as a means of spiritual progress, the desire of the writer in undertaking his pleasant duty will be gratified; and the lesson our lamented friend so often taught in life will be learned now that she rests from her labours, and her works follow her. She "being dead, yet speaketh."

But we must pass on to the last scenes of Ellen Hunt's life. During the winter of 1862-3 disease made rapid progress. In a letter dated January 7th, 1863, she writes, "You ask, dear friend, if I think disease has made progress since you saw me. I do not hesitate to answer that it has done so considerably. The actual suffering of these months, the coughs and accompaniments, the weakness of both mind and body, have a message I cannot but receive, 'The Lord is at hand.' Very real, very solemn seems the nearness of eternity; and while

I do not forget the wonderful dealings of God in the former time of bringing low and raising up, nor cease to ask His interposition, (if so be I may yet work for Him), yet I may not count on this, but rather seek to be ready for my call. Pray for me, dear friend, that 'Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.'" In the spring she rallied again, and was enabled to revisit the much-loved house of prayer. But a return of hæmorrhage in July may be dated as "the beginning of the end." Two days after it occurred she writes, "But all these sicknesses are among the things that 'have an end'; and perhaps the end for me is 'nearer now than I think.' If so, dear —, my hope in Christ, my *one*, my *only* hope is 'sure and stedfast,' entering 'into that within the veil.' It is blessed to be secure; to feel the cable which holds the soul's only anchor give out with every strain, but never give way. The whole gospel is true; I know it, and rejoice, believing with my whole heart." Every plan that the science of a skilful medical attendant could devise was resorted to to check disease; but no human power is yet known that can stay the steady progress of pulmonary consumption. Writing in the autumn, she tells a friend, "The doctor said I had rallied beyond his expectations; but my own opinion that steady progress is being made towards the end of

this pilgrimage, is not affected at all by these little changes. No real check to disease has occurred since the attack of July 5th. Do you remember describing a landscape in Trinidad, which consisted of a long valley between lofty mountains, terminating in another valley, from whence there was no other exit? It seems that I have just such a spiritual scene before me. I am threading the first valley, step by step: on either side, the 'mount of God's unchanging love,' which reassures while it overshadows. Soon I shall enter the final valley; but when I get to the utmost end, and find no path onward, I shall see that 'upward' is the order of that day, and the exit shall be by *ascension*." But though walking "through the valley," she feared no evil; on the contrary she was kept in perfect peace, and filled with "joy unspeakable." To the same friend she says, "I wish I could convey to you some adequate idea of the entire content and satisfaction with God which has underlain every other experience for nearly six weeks past. Not mere satisfaction with His providences towards myself, but an intense apprehension of the fitness of method and end of the great salvation. Admiration, adoration, love; these are the gradations of feeling excited by near views of God in Christ reconciling sinners to Himself. In all that belongs to that glorious scheme of redemption, my

trust grows more confident day by day. This is of Him, and I name it because I want Him to have more praise than I can give." On November 29th she writes, "God, in His great mercy, has permitted the completion on earth of my twenty-sixth birthday. What though it closed amid bodily pain and mental weakness: none the less, perhaps all the more, has it shown forth the unfailing love of Him, who still keeps me in His thoughts, and has left no moment un comforted. Now I have descended the last little hill of retrospection: no more looking back for me; all my spiritual energies must be directed forwards, until I reach the light which shines beyond the valley I am treading. I confess this has been a season of sadness. To spend my next birthday with Jesus is indeed a sweet anticipation, but my heart sorrows with the loving ones I am leaving, and more than ordinary weakness of body renders me unable to bear up very firmly. Yet I am full of peace, and although thoughts of death are very solemn, they bring nothing of distress: 'I know whom I have trusted.'"

As our dear friend felt death approaching, she calmly made preparations for finishing her service on earth. She sent to the *Sunday School Teachers' Magazine* the following verses, which, we think, all will regard as exceedingly appropriate as a final contribution to its pages.

"Give an account of thy stewardship."

THOUGHTS OF A DYING TEACHER.

"O good and gracious Master,
Who didst vouchsafe to call
My talents to Thy service,
Though few they were and small;
Whose love did lighten labour,
Whose smiles my courage fired,
Whose promise and example
To noblest aims inspired:

Thou only, only knowest
What might my life have been,
Its actual shortcomings
Thine eye alone hath seen;
But now, the past reviewing
Through penitential tears,
My stricken soul confesseth
The faithlessness of years.

O Jesus, O my Master,
So oft betrayed, denied!
By cowardly concessions
Wounded and crucified;
By heartless prayers and praises
Grieved, to just anger driven,
O Patient, O Forbearing,
How much Thou hast forgiven!

In all Thy sacred service
Committed to my trust,
I stand this day convicted
Of stewardship unjust;

Called an account to render
Of faithful duties done
With single aim to please Thee,
Alas! I find not one.

O much-enduring Master,
How vast Thy love must be,
Which speaketh words of pardon
And tenderness to me!
How dear the mediation,
How rich the atoning blood,
Which covers my transgression
And seals my peace with God!

Here, at Thy feet, O Master,
With mingled grief and joy,
I learn that Thou hast deigned
Me, worthless, to employ:
In sin, in weakness spoken,
Thine own all-saving word
Hath reached a few poor wanderers,
And brought them to the Lord.

Not all alone before Thee
Shall I, a saved one, stand,
For 'children' Thou hast given me,
A small, but loving band;
And these shall blend their praises
With mine before Thy throne—
O good and gracious Master,
The glory is Thine own!

And now, my labours ended,
My time for labour past,
Once more on Thee, dear Saviour,
This guilty soul I cast;
Oh let Thy grace, pronouncing
Her life-long sins forgiven,
Make room for earth's poor saved one
Among the saints in heaven."

Together with these lines she sent the following note to the editor :

"September 28th, 1863.

Dear Sir,

Through the kindness of a friend, who lent her hand and pen to aid my inability, I am permitted to send a last contribution to the Magazine, which I have long loved, as affording room to speak for Jesus. I cannot without pain close even so small a door of usefulness, but linger with my hand still upon its hinge, that I may look and speak a loving 'farewell' to my brothers and sisters, who yet remain in the field of Sunday School labour. There is no *need* of my feeble testimony to the faithfulness of a prayer-hearing God; but so sweet is it to tell of, that I must beg your indulgence yet one last time. Dear Mr. Editor, my dying couch (or what seems, to all human judgment, likely to be so) has, within the space of one fortnight, been cheered by the avowal of *four* individuals, who had been the subjects of anxious

waiting and supplication for several years, that they have been led to see and believe in Jesus crucified. Shall I own that in one case I had not faith enough to expect that this side of eternity would make known to me the 'answer of peace'? Thus are my days of silent waiting made vocal with thanksgiving—'He is faithful that promised'! If you think this incident might encourage some one who has already waited years for a soul's new birth, you are welcome to communicate it, not naming me. And now, dear sir, will you accept my Christian regards and thanks for the uniform kindness with which you have received my little papers, and believe me,

Yours in Jesus,

ELLEN ST. JOHN HUNT.

Finished Sept. 30th."

The 6th December was the last Sunday she spent downstairs. On this day a touching incident occurred. She sat down at the piano and tried to play, and to sing a hymn of praise to Christ. But her right hand had forgotten its cunning: her fingers had lost their power, and her voice failed her. This sign of growing weakness seemed much to impress her. She sat for a time silently, yet not sadly, at the piano, and then penned the following lines:

"Making melody in the heart."

O'er the old keys fondly straying,
Moves a feeble wasted hand
Scarce to waken sounds assaying,
Yet there mingle with the playing
Songs which angels understand.

Sealed the lips that once were singing,
Voiceless, wordless, now their lays,
From the silent heart up-springing,
Yet thro' Heaven's wide arches ringing,
Passeth a sweet psalm of praise.

Gently, tenderly revealing
His dear presence, comes the Lord ;
And at once His sick one feeling
Life thro' all her pulses stealing,
Strikes a glad triumphant chord.

And her spirit sings "Hosanna" !
All unheard by mortal ear,
As she waits beneath the banner
Of His love, like waiting Anna,
Till her Lord shall draw more near.

Then in blest anticipation
Of the hour so soon to come,
Gains the weak hand animation,
And with fervent exultation
Wakes the joy-note, "Home, sweet Home" !

O'er the old keys fondly straying,
Lingers yet that wasted hand ;
But the heart it is that's playing,
Ever singing, never staying,
Songs which angels understand.

The remaining weeks of Miss Hunt's life were a period of extreme suffering. She appeared to have a wonderful tenacity of life, and passed through all the stages of her fatal malady. Yet in the midst of oft-recurring acute pains or utter exhaustion her peace was unabated. Her constant reply to her mother, whose affectionate solicitude prompted frequent enquiries, was, "Peace, mother dear, all peace." Whenever strength allowed, her fervent desire to glorify Christ led her to speak of Him with that warmth and persuasiveness which none who have heard her will forget. To a friend she wrote, "I do so want every visit to be attended with a communication of good as well as a reception of it." Her wish was gratified in the case of many who came to see her. Her venerable pastor, Mr. Alexander, towards whom she entertained the warmest affection, in letters to the writer, bears this testimony to the effect of these interviews on himself. "Oh! how many of my visits to her have been times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which have made me feel that I was brought to the house of God and

the very gate of heaven." "Never did I visit a dying Christian whose faith and hope and confidence were more edifying and encouraging, and if you and I be sustained and blessed as she was in the prospect of death, then death itself will be far more of a friend than an enemy."

One incident will illustrate her humility and her desire to glorify the Saviour. Shortly before her death she called two of her dearest friends to the bedside and said, "I want you to promise me, that when I am gone, you will never allow any one to speak in my praise on account of what God has enabled me to do, without ascribing to *Him* the glory. I am a poor sinful creature; in me dwelleth no good thing, but I could not endure the thought of God being so dishonoured."

Notwithstanding excessive weakness of body, the sufferer's mind retained a remarkable degree of strength almost to the very last. One sleepless night in January, she called for paper and pencil and wrote down a farewell to her friends. A few copies were printed for private circulation, and she subsequently gave permission that after her death it might be presented to a wider circle of readers, who, we think, cannot fail to recognise in its devout, its heavenly aspirations, the impress of no ordinary Christian's mind. The lines are as follows :

" Whither goest thou ! "

Oh, loved ones, whose gentle friendship,
Hath gladdened my course on earth,
Joy with me, no longer a pilgrim,
But nearing the land of my birth !
Mine eyes are greeting the brightness
Of yon many-mansioned home,
And whilst yet I stand in the Border Land,
I can reckon the steps to come !

Those steps are few and easy,
For the harder ones are past,
And now no shade doth make afraid,
Since love-light on each is cast ;
I am leaving the storm and the battle,
For the haven of perfect rest,
And whilst yet I stand in the Border Land,
I'm numbered amongst the blest !

I go with life's dear affections
All vigorous, true, and fresh,
For love is the purest gift of God,
And cannot die with the flesh ;
Oh think not, tho' I leave ye,
One human tie shall sever,
For whilst I stand in the Border Land,
These are growing more strong than ever !

It may be mine to help ye,
Whilst yet ye journey here,
Sometimes by wakening memories
Of converse past and dear ;

Of seasons when together
We knelt before the Throne—
But *not* while I stand in the Border Land
Can "I know as I am known,"

Or tell, or even imagine,
What work, *what* joys are given
To those who wait their final state
In the ante-room of heaven ;
Who wait until "this mortal"
Be raised from the dust—
But whilst I stand in the Border Land
For all that is veiled, I *trust*.

I go to dwell in the presence
Of one who is dearer far
Than the cherished here, or lamented there
Where they who have left us are ;
I go to bask in His favour,
To rest in His close embrace,
And whilst yet I stand in the Border Land,
I yearn to behold His face !

Now, loving ones, gather around me,
Forgetting the things of time,
Eternal hills of promise
Invite *you too* to climb ;
On the steadfast Rock of Ages
Your weary footsteps stay,
Until you stand in the Border Land,
As I am standing to-day !

O Father-God, who hast loved us
With an everlasting love!
O Saviour who hast bought us
With blood all price above!
O Spirit, whose grace hath led us
Along life's chequered past!
Guide by Thy hand thro' the Border Land,
And welcome us all at last!

Gradually, very gradually, the end came and found her crying "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." "The first night," writes a friend, "after the doctor had informed her of the probability that she had not many more hours to live, was spent in almost constant communion with Jesus. The tone of voice was peculiar and low, so that we could only now and then catch a few words. So solemn was the time that we feared interruption, or might have heard more." Such communion was her highest enjoyment. At times, especially in the night, those who watched in her chamber felt spell-bound as they heard her speaking or whispering to her unseen Saviour. If, imagining she spoke to them, they now and then asked her if she called, she would reply "No dears, I did not call you; I was only speaking to *Him*." Even when the effects of pain or of the necessary treatment so prostrated her, that the slightest effort at thought was too much for her strength, she would say, "But *He* knows how willingly I have offered

prayer and praise, and now that I cannot, He will not leave me, for He knoweth my frame. He is here, although I cannot always realise His presence. The tempter has succeeded in depriving me of joy, but my Father has not permitted him to disturb my peace." Thus she lingered from January to March. On March 8th, a fresh attack of hæmorrhage occurred. "I am much nearer, dear," she said to a friend, "I think you are come to see me die. I do want to realise the presence of Jesus more, but He has taken the sting of death away. 'Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

When Ellen Hunt was about six years old, a lady met with her playing on the beach at Yarmouth. In the spirit of the good Shepherd she soon gained the affections of the little lamb, and taught her this simple prayer :

"Precious Jesus!
Fill my heart with love to Thee."

She received it into her heart as well as into her memory. In after days she delighted to teach it to the little ones who came beneath her influence; and it was the last prayer she was distinctly heard to utter. Ere long the prayer was answered "exceeding abundantly." On Friday afternoon, March 11th, 1864, the last hour arrived, when

"The angel of the covenant
Was come, and faithful to his promise, stood
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark shade."

For many years she had been striving to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"; and now at length she was "filled with all the fulness of God." "Absent from the body," she was "present with the Lord." And in *His* "presence is fulness of joy": at *His* "right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

E. S. P.

THOUGHTS

OF

SUNSHINE IN SORROW.

"God blessed the seventh day."—GEN. ii. 3.

How delightful must have been the brightness and freshness of that first Sabbath. Then earth was a great temple, whose emerald pavement and many-shaded tapestries told of the mercy and condescension of Him who formed the eyes that were to look upon that soft but vivid green; whose roof was the o'er-arching canopy of heaven's own sapphire, varied with clouds in whose fleecy wreaths no shade of tempest lurked. The sun, obedient to his Creator's call, looks out upon the verdant earth to warm it and to bless; nature, animate and inanimate, is vocal with a joyful "Hallelujah!"

And man, the lordly creation of yesterday, gazes with clear and "single" eye on the world of Eden, seeing in every opening leaf, in every creeping insect, in every golden sunbeam, His glory whose name is "Love."

What an anthem was that which joined with angel songs, on the world's resting-day! Springing from the gratitude of pure hearts, it welled up unconstrained, like the fountain whose waters cannot be hid. Surely it must have been the echo of that Sabbath hymn which stirred to its depths the malignity of hell, and brought Satan on his direful errand. But his subtle plot would have failed, we think, had he exhibited his bait that day. Yea, the song must cease, its last echo die away in the distance, the life of Paradise become a familiar thing, ere the new man's ambition can be awakened to crave a further good.

How sadly different the life-picture of a Sabbath *now*! The garden of God has become a wilderness. True, the voice of holy song to-day salutes a Saviour risen, and hails a world redeemed; but it riseth amid the disturbance and discord of unstrung harps and

broken sighs, lamenting that the spoiler has come upon our high places.

But it was God, not man, who "sanctified" the Sabbath; man, not God, who desecrated it. And as God's ordinances must stand for ever, so the Sabbath in its pristine beauty, aye and in beauty far, far transcending that of Eden, is destined to dawn again on "new heavens and a new earth, wherein *dwelleth* righteousness."

No picture of imagination shall we draw then; "our eyes shall see it." We shall sing in the choir, when He who died and is alive again shall lead the praises of the great congregation. No place shall be empty by reason of sickness; no voice shall fail through trembling; but once again pure worship shall be spontaneous, and of that Sabbath there shall be no end.

We "look for it." Yes, is not this our "hope"? Is it not for this we wait with earnest expectation, numbering the faintly typing Sabbaths of earth as so many hours which must strike ere the day that crowns the new creation can dawn upon our eyes.

MY DEAREST C.,

Is there not, for us who have received the inheritance of exceeding great and precious promises, abundant comfort and assurance in the declaration that "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever." (ECCLES. iii. 14.)

Forgiveness is the act of God ; we then forgiven once, are forgiven "for ever."

Salvation is the gift of God ; saved once, we are safe "for ever."

Atonement is the work of God ; Jesus, offered once, is offered "for ever."

I need not enlarge upon these great truths ; indeed I feel as if many words would but be like drapery concealing the living form we desire to look upon. And one of the beauties of our precious gospel is, that its grand doctrines can be put in few and easy words, taxing neither mind nor memory. Oh, how full of condescension is He who, although he has the "tongue of the learned," yet stoops to speak to us in short sentences like that I have referred to, and often repeats the same truth in varied phrase, that we may take hold of it at all times !

"Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be *for ever*."

"I have loved thee with an *everlasting* love."
"The Lord commanded the blessing, even life
for evermore." "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth
for ever." "By one offering He hath perfected
for ever them that are sanctified."

Ah, dearest, if thus our God binds Himself
to deal with us in love and mercy, to quicken
and perfect us, not only to the end of time but
through the endless eternity, what less can He
expect of us than that we should "*trust* in the
Lord *for ever?*" May we be found believing
while He is found performing! * * *

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We have often lately drawn encouragement
and stimulus from the example of Bible saints,
who strengthened themselves in time of trouble
by looking up to God, and taking hold of His
covenant. This morning I was attracted by a
passage in that beautiful 119th psalm, where,
amid many prayers, and many expressions

of dutiful resolve, the writer exclaims, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto Thy word." (verse 65.)

This is the verdict we shall surely pronounce on God's dealings looked at as a whole, when each particular incident has settled into its appointed place in that plan of love which has for its object "our sanctification." (1. THESS. iv. 3.) Then our eyes becoming clearer and stronger as we grow more accustomed to the light of the Spirit's teaching, will look backward on those links in the chain which once seemed so lustreless that we thought they could not be stamped with the love-mark of our Father, and will see that these are now shining as purely as the brightest, and shewing in living letters the motto, "God is love."

The example of the psalmist has greater force for you and me, from the fact that he knew so much of personal affliction. He speaks of *comfort in affliction* derived from the faithful word of a faithful God. "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." (verse 50.)

He has learned the *benefit of affliction*, to

check the wandering heart and renew the soul's obedience. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. (verse 67.)

He recognises the *wholesomeness of affliction*, as a part of that education which his Father is carrying on so wisely. "It is good for me," says he. (verse 71.) "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant."

And moreover, he makes all these acknowledgments while yet the affliction is prolonged. "I *am* afflicted very much." (verse 107.)

Thus we learn that the suffering saint did not reckon it any departure from His promise when God sent trouble, or sorrow, or pain; nay, even in deep and prolonged trials, he vindicates the love of God, and declares that even these are "according to Thy word." Let us, dearest, settle it in our hearts that God is dealing well with us, and let us not fail to testify our acquiescence in His wise, loving method of fulfilling His word, by *often* expressing it in praise, and *always* in patient trust.

* * * *

"It is Well."

(A PARABLE.)

Across my cottage window
A kindly sunbeam glanced,
Like a thread of golden beauty,
Which all it touched enhanced ;
And oh ! it was so cunning,
This little sparkling beam !
It made my humble dwelling
Just like a palace seem.

Within my cottage window
A tiny rose-tree grew ;
I loved it as the token
Of a friendship fast and true ;
So carefully I watered
And tended it each day,
And thought of One who gave it,
But who was far away.

All through the livelong morning
That friendly sunbeam stayed,
And o'er my little rose-tree
So lovingly it played !

There must have been a magic
In its warm and genial ray,
For even my heart grew lighter
Beneath its silent sway.

Beside my cottage-window
In calm delight I stood,
Reading the golden message
That spoke so much of good ;
I watched, until it faded
From the highest window pane,
And my room, for lack of sunshine,
Was mean and dark again.

Then something of the old care
Returned upon my heart,
And I murmured for a moment
That the sun should e'er depart—
But a voice—oh ! *so* familiar !—
On my ear that moment fell ;
“ Be hopeful—do not murmur—
“ Say rather—‘ It is well ’ ! ”

That voice—was it an echo
From the distant, distant past ?
Or can my Loved One's shadow
Even now be o'er me cast ?

I turned me to the rose-tree,
That Loved One's parting token,
As if it could have answered !
The fragile stem was broken !

Oh then, in passionate sorrow
I mourned my lot of pain,
And said, " If all things perish,
I ne'er may love again ! "
But 'mid the gathering darkness,
Once more those accents came—
" Lovest thou me ? Then weep not,
For I am still the same ! "

Oh, it was no delusion !
That was the very tone
In which like words of comfort
He spake in days bygone !
And now, Him close beside me
Whose love I cannot tell,
Sunlight and flowers denied me,
My heart sings, " It is well ! "

"We have found Him!"—JOHN i. 45.

How welcome the tidings brought by his friend Philip to Nathanael, the sincere worshipper of God, the steadfast watcher for the appearance of "Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write!" How gladly would he turn from all the world beside, to seek his portion also in this newly-manifested Saviour! And with what glowing satisfaction, when himself had come to Jesus, and received personal benefit from His gracious teachings, would he testify to all seekers, "I have found Him! I have found Him!"

Beloved, shall not you and I add our voices to the chorus now happily arising from myriad souls unto Him who has satisfied their longing, hungering, thirsting, for a peace with God which no effort of their own could obtain?

"We have found Him," our Saviour, sufficient to save our helpless souls, to heal our sicknesses, to forgive our trespasses, to "keep us from falling" now, and hereafter to raise us up from the dead, and introduce us to eternal life.

"We have found Him," our dearest Friend,

the One we wanted so long, and sought so vainly among our earthly acquaintance. "We have found Him" worthy of all confidence, equal to every emergency, ready with sympathy for every trial, with faithful reproof for every fault, with substantial comfort for every sorrow.

Time fails us, words are all too poor, to tell *what* we have found in our precious Jesus. Let our hearts dwell on this theme until it sets them singing for joy, as we gaze upon the priceless "treasure" thus hidden in us as in "earthen vessels."

"The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

"Looking unto Jesus."

O Rock of salvation !
O Refuge for me !
In all tribulation
I flee unto Thee.
When storms of affliction
My spirit dismay,
Thy soft benediction
Turns night into day.

Thou, going before me,
Hast carried Thy cross ;
No shadow falls o'er me
Like *Thy* shame and loss ;
Hence comfort I borrow,
O Saviour Divine !
And from my own sorrow
Take refuge in Thine.

Oh, firm as a mountain
Thy promise doth prove !
Oh, free as a fountain
The tide of Thy love !

I trust Thee, relying
For life on Thy life ;
I look to Thee, dying,
For aid in the strife.

O Love, dear and only !
O light unto me !
How dark and how lonely
My soul but for Thee !
Now tenderly clasp me,
And life is all joy ;
Then—*then*—tightly grasp me,
And cheerful I die !

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I have just lighted on (or rather let me say been led to) an interesting and beautiful figure of the "perfect peace" in which God keeps those "whose mind is stayed on Him." In JOEL iii. 16, it is written, "The Lord will be the hope of His people." The word "hope" is rendered in the margin "place of repair, *harbour*."

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If you read the whole verse, you will see that God is represented as impressing the world with His terrors, "roaring," "uttering His voice," causing the heavens and the earth to shake. The imagery is very similar to that employed in Psalm xxix., where the "voice of the Lord" is generally understood to refer to *thunder*, as the "flames of fire" represent *lightning*. Indeed the psalm is supposed to have been suggested by, if not written during, a tempest, which is no uncommon occurrence in Palestine.

Supposing the prophet to use the figure in this way, it seems that he would compare the condition of God's trusting people, while judgment and omnipotence were being exhibited in all their awful grandeur to the world around, with that of a ship riding calmly and at rest, in the harbour of refuge, unshaken by the storm-tossed billows, while vessels on the open sea were rolling in distress. "*The Lord* will be the *Harbour* of His people."

Dearest, you are one of His people; therefore you are in the Harbour. What though the open sea be rough! *You* are not exposed

to its dangers. What though "the voice of the Lord" be uttered in threatening thunder to the sleeping, sin-loving world! To *you* that voice comes "still" and "small," like the gentle ripples which enter the peaceful harbour-gates.

"God is a refuge *for us*," "we will rejoice and be glad" in Him.

Ever your affectionate,

MY OWN DEAR C.,

A sweet and precious promise for you and me, as for all the chastened family of God, is that contained in JER. xlv. 28—"I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure." So emphatic and important is this assurance of our Father's gentle and wise education of us, that it is here stated the second time, having already been recorded in ch. xxx. 11. I like to note these occasional reiterations of the same words;—it is like the "Verily verily," which adds so much weight to our Saviour's gospel declarations.

If we look back to ch. x. 24, we overhear the mourning prophet, pouring out his heart in the prayer, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment (or in measure); not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing." The prayer went up for himself; it was the cry of a child, who, while deprecating his father's anger, yet earnestly desired to be trained with a father's discipline. A humble, submissive, sin-stricken heart sent up such a cry as that; it was a prayer *of the closet*.

Time passed, and the fatherly discipline ceased not to chasten the praying son; but bye-and-bye, in the course of his prophetic service, a verbal answer came, not alone to the praying *one*, but addressed also to the whole nation of his sinning countrymen. Oh, how richly does our God *exceed* the prayers of His children! We bow beneath the sense of our own ill-deservings; we look on our neighbours, and (as it were) confess their sins with our own; and He gives an answer of peace, and promise large enough and broad enough to take *all* in!

Personally, to *you*, my own C., as much as to the guilty nation of old, is this promise given,

"I will not make a full end of thee, but will correct thee in measure." "The Lord do as He hath said."

Ever your loving,

"My God shall supply *all your need* according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." PHIL. iv. 19.

"You have need of *patience*." HEB. x. 36.

"*Your Father knoweth* what things ye have need of." MATT. vi. 8.

I do not think, dear C., that I can better select for you to-day, than just to put down in a cluster these three consoling passages, so lately quoted beside your couch. You were telling me then how often you required to be reminded of that which is indeed so familiar and so precious, and I therefore hope that in laying these texts before you so soon again, I am not making a "*vain repetition*."

It is very sweet to find one's self and God thinking the same thing. Sweet, I mean, as an assurance that the Spirit of God is within

us. And thus, when you cry from the depths of your heart, "Oh, for more *patience*," you are but echoing the "mind of the Spirit" who writes, "you *have* need of *patience*." Is not then this cry of yours the voice of the Spirit's intercession, which "He maketh for (or *in*) the saints, according to the will of God"? (Rom. viii.27.) Oh! blessed harmony, when we wish for that which God delights to give!

And how soft and soothing the Saviour's words, "your *Father* knoweth"! He knows all the oppressive force of circumstances, and the feeble nature of His chastened child. Who so ready to palliate the fractiousness which sometimes tells how the weakness of the flesh bears down the willing spirit? With *fatherly* tenderness, making fullest allowance for the poverty and need which appeal so constantly to His compassion, He hastens with the "riches" of a *God* to supply our utmost demand.

And here our dear, dear Jesus is presented as the "Mediator," bringing down the supply. "*By* Christ Jesus." The text in which this clause occurs has reference to the general transmission of good through Him; but as we

are thinking to-day of the gift of "patience" in particular, we may be reminded that looking at Christ is the great means of increasing our growth in this longed-for grace.

That you, by "considering Him who endured," may find your "need" supplied, is the Sabbath prayer of your loving—

"Consider the Lilies."

Flowers fair as those that bloomed in Paradise,
Spring up around us still :
With hues of Eden greet our longing eyes,
And Eden's sweets distil.

Heaven's garden is not closed to human tread,
But widened in its bound :
For surely God's own blessing must be shed,
Wherever flowers are found.

These are the stars of earth, the graceful host
Of God's bright witnesses,
Who, glancing meekly upward, seem to boast
Almighty *gentleness*.

"God cares for us"! they whisper, and the breeze

Beareth their voice on high :
And stormy winds that rock the forest trees
With flowers deal tenderly.

"God cares for *us*!" O missionary flowers !
Ye bloom not idly here ;
So gently chiding in our faithless hours,
"Why doubt ye? *God is near*!"

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. viii. 32.

Did you ever stay your thoughts on the first clause of this wonderful verse, till you gained an insight, clear and deep, into that love where-with "God so loved the world," and felt lost in its breadth, and length, and depth, and height? If you have, I know you will feel that the subject is one that invites return, and brightens even while we look at it.

One of the "exceeding great and precious

promises" on which we, as children of the kingdom rest, is worded thus:—"I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (MAL. iii. 17.) And thus making use of the natural promptings of a human father's heart, a heart whose affections received their pure impulse from the heart of God, *the Great Father*, the Promiser assures us of loving protection, and this both on the ground of our filial relationship, ("his own son,") and as the reward of our filial duty, ("that serveth him.") Such is the promise given to us, *the adopted*. But in the meanwhile, how does that large fatherly heart endure to witness the sufferings of "*his own Son*"? "For Him He spared not." How infinitely near and dear the union of the Paternal and the Filial Godhead! How perfect the service of that Son who did always those things that pleased His Father! Measured by this rule, what must be the greatness of *redeeming* love, which stayed not the hand of Omnipotent Mercy, and for the salvation of a rebellious world, *would not* spare His own Son? Do we, beloved friend, "know and believe the love that God hath for us"?

Perhaps we have both felt, in reading that touching parable of the wicked husbandmen, (LUKE xx. 9—15) a sort of surprise that the father should be represented as sending his "beloved son" into the midst of such treacherous and wicked men? And the Great Teacher, as if intending to account for a proceeding so strange, pictures the human parent as anticipating a different reception for the dignified messenger; "It may be they will reverence my Son." But He, of whom the "certain man" was but an outlined picture, knew well that His Beloved must be sent to shameful treatment, scorn and death, at the hands of those He came to save: *yet* "He spared not His own Son." And in that He "delivered Him up for us all," "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things"? Aye, surely, "all things" must be infinitely less than this One Gift. If the heart of God did not shrink from giving its own Best Beloved, and watching day by day the sufferings which, piercing the Son, must pierce the Father too, would not leave the sacrifice unoffered, because it "so loved the world"; what good thing can

that heart withhold from its redeemed ones now? Every thing God gives now is only a pleasure to Himself;—but He once gave that which cost Him the sight of a suffering Son.

Look trustfully up, afflicted one, for shall He not “*freely* give you all things”?

“*Be not afraid ; only believe.*”

The rain falls fast, and clouds are dark,
Yet shines the sun behind ;
And a fair bow, God’s promised mark,
Thine upturned eye shall find ;
“Be not afraid :” the raging storm
Doth but thy Father’s will perform !

“Only believe :” in darkest night
The stars most clearly shine ;
If earthly helps are put to flight,
Thou shalt have aid divine.
Stand still, and His salvation see,
Who promises to care for thee !

MY BELOVED C.,

The question which was so scornfully addressed to King Hezekiah by the haughty invader Sennacherib, has often come home to me with searching power; "What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?" (Is. xxxvi. 4.) Thank God, the "searchings of heart" to which it leads, do but settle more firmly the foundation of my assurance; and I know that you too can bear, nay, can rejoice to look at the demand, let whomsoever make it. For it is part of our privilege no less than our duty, to be "able to give an answer to him that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us."

What is our confidence wherein we trust? Surely we can both look up to God and say, "I hope in *Thy word!*" The promise of Him "who cannot lie" is the ground of our hope; and what can drive us from such a changeless, stedfast Rock as this?

God hath said it, that whosoever believeth on Him shall never be put to confusion.

"Our trust" then "is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

"For ever, O Lord, *Thy word* is settled in

Heaven." "The *word* of our God shall stand for ever."

"Our fathers trusted and Thou didst deliver." Yes, and Hezekiah trusted, while the proud Assyrian recounted his deeds of prowess and of victory, boasting that the gods of the nations had not been able to deliver *them*. Hezekiah leaned on "the word *He* hath spoken," and believed it would "surely prevail." We know he was not brought to confusion, and we gladly clasp more tight our "confidence," as we think what a strong refuge it proved to him.

Dearest, you are suffering more than usual; but God's word still abideth sure, "I will be with thee."

"God hath said it, God hath said it,
"God hath said, and I believe,
"God hath said it, God hath said it:
"And the cup I can receive.
"God so willeth, God so willeth,
"Every murmur sweetly stilleth—
"God so wills it, even hath power
"To illume the darkest hour!"

In the Lord hast thou strength and confidence, O suffering one! He does support thee, and He *will*.

"The hand of the Lord is upon all them for good that seek Him."—EZRA viii. 22.

No matter *how* He touches us—whether we feel the pressure of bodily pain or mental provocation—let us only ascertain that it is "*the hand of the Lord*" which is upon us, and we know at once that it is "*for good.*"

How surely a firm trust in the unvarying love of God alters the character and aspect of all His dealings with us; helps us to accept what we cannot see the reason of, to endure what is painful to "*flesh and blood,*" and to expect a bright result from cloudy and dark days.

"The hand of the Lord" *is* upon us, whether we know it or no; but how sweet *to know it!* To feel the touch, to recognize the soft parental hand, gentle even in smiting—this is the privilege only of a child. By this token we know that we are born of God; may He graciously give more of the filial trust and love which mark us as His own!

"Father, forgive them."—LUKE xxiii. 34.

"God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you," writes the Apostle Paul to his Ephesian converts. (EPH. iv. 32.)

"Your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake," repeats John in his first Epistle. (ii. 12.)

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven," says the Lord Jesus Himself, in His absolution of the poor woman, our sister in sin and in penitence.

Oh, beloved, is not the assurance of free forgiveness a whole Gospel in itself? This is salvation ; this is eternal life.

"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure,
"Death hath no sting beside."

And not the sins of our darker days alone are put away by this loving God ; but also the sins of our light and knowledge, of our renewed nature, of our adoption. Aye, our hourly repeated sins of ingratitude, carelessness, and rebellion ; all, all are forgiven, and He "upbraideth not"! We feel sometimes the risings of an impatient Spirit—it is forgiven. We complain of the little love we bear to the

great Lover of our souls—it is forgiven. And our distrust, our undue anxieties, our anticipations of future trouble—all are forgiven.

“For Christ’s sake.” Oh, what a firm foundation this assurance is built upon! The fact that a Saviour’s blood has been shed to procure the boon, ensures to us its bestowment. “Father, forgive them!” was His dying cry; it is also His living intercession.

Be of good cheer, beloved; in Him we have the remission of our sins.

“Love covereth all sins.”

Upon the wondrous Cross I gaze
With silent awe and deep amaze;
God’s own Beloved in anguish see,
And know that anguish borne *for me!*

Numbered with sinners, counted vile,
Who “knew no sin,” Who spake no guile;
The spotless Lamb of God I see
Wounded, reviled, and slain *for me!*

By lowly hands at even laid
In the still garden's distant shade,
Him who must ever live, I see
Sleeping the sleep of death *for me !*
O glorious hour ! O blest surprise !
Jesus by His own power doth rise ;
The Lord of life, I joyful see,
Hath burst the bonds of death *for me !*
Hail, brightest day which yet hath shone
Since God's creating work was done !
The mighty Conqueror I see
Ascend to highest Heaven *for me !*
Enthronéd now at God's right hand,
Adoring angels round Him stand ;
Yet, mindful of my need, I see
The sinner's Friend still pleads *for me !*
The time draws on, when called to die,
Friends listen for my parting sigh ;
Then, closed on earth, mine eyes shall see
Jesus, my Saviour, come *for me !*
An awful day must follow soon,
Dawning in light more clear than noon ;
Then, on His "great white throne," I'll see
My Judge, the Advocate *for me !*

O grace and love beyond compare !
Which I with all Thy saved ones share ;
More be my praise, as more I see
How Thou hast died and liv'st *for me* !

"The Lord our God turned the curse into a blessing unto us, because the Lord our God loved us."—DEUT. xxiii. 5.

WE can never forget how by reason of our descent from the sinner Adam, and no less by reason of our own sins, we were "under the curse," subject to its dire effects, and of ourselves utterly unable to evade them. We might now be mourning our sad condition, and envying the unfallen angels, blessed because of their innocence. But instead of this, we are rejoicing to-day that there has been born to us "a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." We have looked into the heart of God; we have penetrated the infinite depths of His love and mercy, as they who never needed salvation could not possibly do. Surely, by revealing

Himself to us in so glorious redemption, the Lord our God hath turned the very curse of *sin* into a blessing unto us.

You and I, dear fellow-invalid, have perhaps been called to suffer (as *we* feel) rather largely. We know that disease and pain are consequent upon sin, and actually form a portion of sin's curse. But we have learned from the instructions and consolations of Scripture, that "the Lord our God" is making use of these trials to train and prepare us for their entire cessation. And we know from happy experience that affliction draws closer around us an arm of tenderest sympathy, and gives occasion for the exercise of such offices of love as only the Divine Comforter can render. Shall we not devoutly praise "the Lord our God," who hath turned the curse of *sorrow* into a blessing unto us?

We have yet another aspect of "the curse" to look at, another of its experiences to realize. Death is before us, and the natural shrinking of our hearts from the contemplation of its approach, proves how instinctively we feel death is a curse. But He who "was made a

curse for us" (GAL. iii. 13) has so completely changed the character of death, that we are led to regard it as the very beginning of a new and better life, the triumphal arch through which we pass to meet "the Lord our God." O precious Jesus, dying that we might pass through life's portal, unchallenged by him who once kept the gate, thou hast turned the curse of *death* into a blessing unto us, *because Thou hast loved us!*

O beloved, how hath our God dealt with us! "Wonderful" is His name, His ways past finding out! "Happy art thou, O, Israel!" cried Moses; "Who is like unto thee, *O people saved by the Lord?*"

"Who is this Son of Man?"

Say, who is this that weepeth

Beside a loved one's grave?

Say, who is this that sleepeth

Rocked by the raging wave?

Who is this weary stranger
That craves a wayside rest ?
Who is this desert-ranger
By pangs of hunger pressed ?
Who is yon suppliant, kneeling
In lonely, fervent prayer,
Whose sighs and groans are stealing
Through the still midnight air ?
Who is this lowly teacher
Blessing a babe of days ?
Who this heart-stirring preacher
Whose word a nation sways ?
Who is this, bowed and bleeding,
Soul stricken, agonized,
Friends from his side receding,
Alone, in grief baptized ?
Ah, who is this in weakness
By treachery betrayed ?
Who goeth forth in meekness
With robe of scorn arrayed ?
Who, who is this that beareth
The cross of death and shame ?
Who, innocent, that weareth
A malefactor's name ?

Who, *who* is He that dieth
On yon accursed tree?—
“Sinner,” *thy Saviour* crieth,
“I suffered this *for thee*!”

“The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom.”—2 TIM. iv. 18.

SUCH was the firm conviction of the venerable apostle Paul, as he reviewed his much-tried life, and counted the Ebenezers ranged all along its course. Such was his assurance as he stood looking over the boundary of the Better Land, towards which he was now “ready” to depart.

Near as its border seemed, however, his wily foe might yet spread for him some net, or plant himself as “a *lion* in the way.” The flame of cruel persecution might yet blaze up again; the last step of his earthly pilgrimage might leave a blood-stained print behind.

But from the secret net, the ravening lion, he had been delivered times and often; and he now found it good to "hold fast by God." The fire may consume his toil-worn and aged "tabernacle;" but from its ashes, his rejoicing soul, Phoenix-like, shall arise to meet its "Deliverer." Blood may flow to prove that an "evil work" has been wrought upon God's loved servant; but his upward steps shall be marked in brightness, for even "so an entrance shall be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

To us who follow his "faith and patience" is the great apostle's confidence bequeathed. His great enemy is also ours; so is his delivering Lord. We too have Ebenezers to review; we too have a "heavenly kingdom" to anticipate.

"Christ will present our souls,
"Unblemished and complete,
"Before the glory of His face,
"With joys divinely great!"

MY OWN DEAR C.,

I have been enjoying the passage of pathetic retrospect contained in DEUT. viii. 2—16, and thinking how very salutary to our often desponding spirits, is such a review of the way which the Lord our God hath already led us in the wilderness; how calculated to inspire our thankfulness and invigorate our faith. More especially, my thoughts have been attracted and riveted by the declaration in verse 16, of the ultimate purpose God has in view while leading us by such winding paths, surrounding us with such apparent hindrances, or at least difficulties, and every now and then opening out before us such unexpected supplies of “water from the flinty rock,” and “manna” in the fruitless desert.

He “suffered us to hunger” that we might learn our dependence on Him, and thus be prepared to receive food from *His* hand. He leads us through a land where the “serpent-bite” of sin may everywhere be felt, that we may learn to walk with our eyes fixed on Him who alone can save us from its deadly power.

(See JOHN iii. 14, 15, and HEB. xii. 2.) And thus the whole course of our journey is one of humbling and testing discipline ("to humble thee and prove thee"); and the effect of this, in eradicated pride, and in tried and enduring obedience of heart, is to last "for ever and ever." A life-time—but few years at most—is to produce a holy and beautiful character, *perfect* through all eternity. Do we wonder, dear, that to bring forth fruits so permanent, this little space of time should be occupied with uninterrupted pruning and purging of the wild vine on which God has fixed so precious a graft?

The words to which I alluded just now in verse 16 point, however, rather to the final purpose of our Father-Guide, than to the present working of His discipline; "To do thee good at thy latter end." The "latter end" of Israel's typical wanderings was in the land of rest and promise, from whose peaceful coasts they should hereafter gaze back into the travelled wilderness, and confess that, in spite of the serpent, the drought, the hunger, the armed hosts from time to time encamped

against them, He had led them "by the right way to a city of habitation."

And now, if they had indeed "learned obedience by the things which they had suffered," they were as really prepared for the place as the place was for them. Had Israel been at once transferred from Egypt to Canaan, they would not have had the spirit of trained loyalty and filial love to God which only could make them the joyful possessors of His land. And so we see that God, in all His discipline of *us*, is humbling and proving us, just in order that we may be made capable of enjoying "good" at our latter end.

I can only dip into this "well of salvation" a little way in so short a note, dearest, but "the well is deep," and you have "Jesus" to draw for you, so I know, if you ponder the entire passage, much bright and refreshing "water of life" will cheer your silent Sabbath.

Ever lovingly yours,

*“Because God hath dealt graciously with me,
and because I have enough.”*

“God hath dealt graciously with me,”
His favour doth surround
My pathway with life’s fruitful tree,
And living streams abound
Here, where my quiet tent is spread;
Here, too, is mercy’s door,
Through which are ceaseless blessings shed,
On whom the world calls poor.

I am not poor; a prayer of mine,
“Enough” doth daily bring
From His full store whose word divine
Hath promised each “good thing”;
And day by day my sins, forgiven,
Fall off this lightened heart,
And day by day bright hopes of Heaven
Bid earthly cares depart.

“God hath dealt graciously with me”;
He taught me to believe
In Him who died on Calvary’s tree,
That I might pardoned live.

And now I have "enough" of peace,
"Enough" of thankful joy
To bid my very sorrows cease,
And praise my lips employ.

"I have enough"; Oh, sweet content,
My wants are all supplied!
But some still breathe a sad lament,
Still cry as once I cried;
From my full cup of "mercies free"
May grace to these run o'er,
"God hath dealt graciously with me"
That I might feed the poor!

MY OWN C.,

I have been thinking of some various applications of the word "Remember;" and selecting four of the most suggestive, will make them the subject of to-day's note. First then, there is the suggested duty:—

1. "Remember the Lord thy God." (DEUT. viii. 18.)

"Remember now thy Creator."—(ECCLES. xii. 1.) The context in each case proves the

purpose of the admonition : we are bidden to remember God in order to obey and serve Him. And oh, dear C., is not this stirring of our memories very, very needful even for you and me? We are not, indeed, of those who habitually "forget God;" but how many moments there are in which, failing to remember Him, we suffer ourselves to act without Him, and for the time do our own ways, and speak our own words. Therefore again He says to us to-day, "Remember" !

2. There is the suggested comfort. "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Thy wonders of old."

This was the Psalmist's resource in a night of sleeplessness and depression, (see Ps. lxxxvii.) And as he summoned memory to his service, and bade her read over some passages in his own history, and in the history of God's often-tried but ever-succoured people, his soul grew calm again: and ere the morning-star shone through his latticed window, the eye of his faith had penetrated the thick cloud of present trouble, and the "Star of Jacob" appeared in all its changeless brilliance, and turned the

mournful "breathing" (LAM. iii. 56) into a song of confidence. So let us, dear C., "remember" our Father in the night season.

3. Here is a suggested prayer.

"Lord remember me"! (LUKE xxiii. 42.)

This was the prayer of the penitent sinner on his cross.

"Remember me, O my God, for good"!

This was the petition of the faithful and active Nehemiah, (xiii. 31.)

"Lord remember David, and all his afflictions"! (Ps. cxxxii. 1.)

"Remember me with the favour which Thou bearest unto thy people"! (Ps. cvi. 4.)

Thus prayed the royal saint, in affliction claiming the remembrance of sympathy and succour, and in prosperity declaring that he esteemed the favour of God, and a portion among His people, greater riches than a throne or regal treasury.

Thus the prayer "Lord remember me!" is a prayer for all seasons, a prayer for you and me.

4. Best of all, this word suggests to us the assurance and promise of a prayer-hearing God.

"I remember thee." (JER. ii. 2.)

"I do earnestly remember him still." (JER. xxxi. 20.)

"Yet will I not forget thee." (Is. xlix. 15.)

Ah, here is our rest. We may fail in *duty*, neglect the means of *comfort*, even restrain *prayer*; but our God fails *never*, and we are "remembered" according to His word. On this word we depend, for "He is faithful who promised."

Ever yours in Christian fellowship,

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

PSALM xxxi. 24.

HERE, dearest C., is a word of cheer for you and for me—may the Lord the Spirit enable us to yield our hearts to its influence!

David knew what it was to be faint hearted beneath sharp and continuous afflictions; and he knew also what it was to have his fears lightened, his hopes re-kindled, and his trust

in God confirmed by the gentle but effectual energy of the Spirit of God Himself. Therefore, having experience, he leaves behind him, for the benefit of all succeeding sufferers and believers, this testimony, "He *shall* strengthen thine heart"; coupling it with the exhortation, "Wait on the Lord," which here is of course implied, as it is expressed in PSALM xxvii. 14.

Ah, it is not in vain that we "hope in the Lord"; not in vain that we "wait" for the tokens of His helpful presence. I am waiting now, and have been waiting (as it seems to me) a long, long time for the unveiling of His countenance. Some days my poor weak heart is well-nigh weary with longing for renewal of the *manifested* favour which has often almost turned faith to sight. But oh, I would be one of those who "hope and quietly wait;" since it is written to them, "He *shall* strengthen thine heart." ISAIAH l. 10, is very precious to me while thus I "walk in darkness and have no light" from His unveiled face. "The *name* of the Lord" is still mine to "trust in," and I will "be of good courage," knowing that though "for a small moment" He turn

His face from me, yet "with great mercies He
will gather me."

May the message of encouragement we
receive to-day be blessed to us both, that by
our anticipative assurance of good we may
be enabled to rejoice in a faithful God!

"At evening time it shall be light."

I love the Sabbath twilight, when a hush,
Holy and calm, succeeds the toil of days;
When Heav'n seems open'd, and we hear the
gush
Of angel voices pouring hymns of praise.

All Sabbath hours are hallow'd, but when
shades
Of evening gather silently around—
When from our eyes the sunlight softly fades,
And shining dew drops kiss the thirsty
ground—

Then God comes down, and in His garden
walks,

Makes each pure heart his favourite retreat;
With the faint spirit in mild accents talks,
As friend and friend hold mutual converse
sweet.

Now one by one the stars begin to shed
A lustre fairer than earth's richest gems—
The dust of Heav'n shaken out and over-spread
Above our heads, like myriad diadems.

All tell of Him whose presence makes them
bright,

Who far beyond our mortal ken abides;
Of a pure realm, unvisited by night,
Where neither toil, nor care, nor sin betides.

Thus sweetly closes in the day of rest,
And, as we near the busy world again,
'Tis in this parting hour, so calm and blest,
That we a clearer glimpse of Heaven obtain!

In silence hearts grow rich. The gentle
show'rs,

Upon the fainting earth fall noiselessly—
And so our God His sacred Spirit pours,
Our waiting souls to cheer and sanctify.

Thus outer shadows deepen, but within
There beams and brightens into "perfect
day,"
A radiance of celestial origin,
Cloudless, serene, and ne'er to fade away !

*"In a great house there are not only vessels of
gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth."*
—2. TIM. ii. 20.

WHO so large a householder as "our Father?"
In His house are many rooms, "mansions,"
(JOHN xiv. 2.) and there shall not be left one
vacant place when all His ransomed children
are brought home. In the service of so vast a
family, how many and how various agencies
and implements will be employed !

Comparative degrees of honour, doubtless,
will attach to these ; but not comparative de-
grees of *importance*, for this must be determined
alike for all by the fact that each will be filling
its own appointed place, and doing its own
appointed work, according to the will of "the
Master."

The hewers of wood, the drawers of water, were real officers of the Temple ; a king from his throne looked longingly on the privileges of the humble "door-keeper" who belonged to the sacred place. And, shall not we, beloved, who are so continually reminded that we are indeed "*earthen* vessels," rejoice to find that in the "great house" above, even "vessels of wood and of earth" have a place and a work assigned by the Master ?

And yet, while we so delight to find that our "low estate" does not shut us out of Heaven, and adore the condescension which thus deigns to make use of weak and base vessels for His glory, we cherish a holy ambition to shew forth the marvellous power of that Hand which turneth all to *gold*. Yes, our God is the True Alchymist—He maketh "vessels unto honour" out of materials no better by nature than those we furnish ; and we, even *we*, may be "refined as gold seven times purified," "sanctified, and made meet for the Master's use !"

Be of good cheer, beloved sufferer ; that all-transmuting Hand is laid on *you* !

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Psalmist might well say "If the *foundations* be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" And we may well be often examining the basis on which our hopes are built; not indeed because the "Rock of Ages" *can* be moved, but because each examination tends to exhibit His immutability, and thus to establish and confirm our faith.

You and I, dear, have together traced the inscriptions on many of the foundation-stones already, and we find, although they are clothed in a variety of words, that all may be summed up in two—"Free grace." So sweet, so restful and precious is this assurance, that we can never weary of having it brought to light. Let us to-day read the motto on another of those massive stones which support the "strong tower" of our own personal "salvation." "The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; *because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people.*" (1 SAM. xii. 22.)

What an answer is this to all those insinuations of the tempter that we are not worthy objects for such a gift as that of the Fatherly

love of God! We see nothing of worthiness in the conditions of the everlasting covenant; we need no recommendation in ourselves to the favour of Heaven. Our confidence rests not on any imagined merit of our own: "just as we are," with all our deficiency, all our delinquency, "*it hath pleased the Lord* to make us His people"! What can Satan say to this? What can our own slow hearts say to it? "It hath pleased the Lord"; "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The "city" which God hath prepared for us "lieth four-square"; it is solid and enduring; it hath many foundation-stones, all weighty and steadfast, and all inscribed with "*By grace are ye saved*," in manifold forms of expression. We have no foundations to *lay*, but we have many to *look at*—yet all of one, Jesus Christ Himself.

"The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure."

With much love and every Sabbath wish,
believe me, dear C., Affectionately yours.

“And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them. And they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid.”—MARK x. 32.

Is not this, in some particulars, descriptive of us as pilgrims, our destination, our Leader, our feelings as we pass on our way? Perhaps you may find it interesting and profitable as a Sabbath study, to trace the analogy so far as it holds, and may draw from this text a helpful suggestion. A few points which occur to me now I will put down, but you will, by the teaching Spirit's aid, be able to gather more, and dive deeper.

1st. The disciples were bound for Jerusalem, the City of the Great King. We are bound for the New Jerusalem, that holy City which hath foundations, whose Temple is the Lord God Himself; whose sacred joy-feast is the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

2ndly. Marking out the path by His own footsteps, “Jesus went before them.” And He is “our Glorious Leader” also. Not merely in the sense of having once lived our human

life, and died our human death ; but (I think) in the more special sense of accompanying and going before us in each diversified scene of our individual experience. So that however varied your path may be from mine, it is nevertheless not only appointed but trodden by Him. Ah, if only our faith were sight, you and I would never feel lonely ; we should see our Leader, not walking fast so as to leave us far behind, but just a step in advance, so that we might follow without swerving from the straight track.

3rdly. The disciples did not always walk at ease even though they saw their Master. They sometimes wondered why He led them just that way to Jerusalem ; and as He did not volunteer to give reasons for what He did, and they revered Him too much to ask "Why?" they kept on wondering until at last fear crept into their hearts—"they were afraid." Is not this very like us? Do we not often, instead of simply following Jesus a step at a time, allow our thoughts to question why He leads us in this way rather than by a short cut, an easy path? And surprise at His steps, where

we did not expect them, prepares the way for nervous fears lest we should not go safely. Does not this afford a hint to check our soul's first expression of amaze, and turn our thoughts at once to contemplate the end towards which we journey, and the Leader who goeth before us?

4thly. Though wondering and even afraid, the disciples "followed" still. Their faith triumphed over their unbelief. We must make this an analogy; "oh, for an *overcoming* faith"!

"We also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses."—HEB. xii. 1.

How wonderful this statement in relation to our position as servants or sufferers!

Can it be that you and I, dear fellow-pilgrim, in our little "loopholes of retreat," are the objects of interested watching, not only to our God, whose eyes are in every place, but to a vast multitude, such as "time would fail" an apostle "to tell of"? We are assured

that such is the case. Paul said of himself and his companions in tribulation, that they were made "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." And here we find him extending this statement to the circumstances of every Christian "racer."

Since then our course is the subject of remark to a class of persons whom we do not see, we may well be desirous to know who they are, and what kind of remarks they are likely to make.

Looking back to the eleventh chapter, we see that the apostle is referring to those who have gone before us in the pathway of promise; who died in faith; who are now living in faith; who wait until we, their followers, shall be "made perfect" with them.

1. They have gone before us in the pathway of promise: "our fathers trusted."

We are not the first who have built their hopes, and shaped their course by the word of God. We are not the first who have gone forth "not knowing whither." We are not the first who have encountered disappointments, endured trials, persevered through diffi-

culties, "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," earnestly desiring "a better country." Nay, the path is well trodden; "these all" have gone the same way to rest. And as they look down on us, struggling far behind, do we not seem to hear them say "Courage, dear friends! you are on the right road"?

2. They "died in faith." The promised good was not realized to the full on earth; not one had received it when called away. But they yielded not their trust in the hour of death, it accompanied them into the unseen world. Speak they not to us, beloved? "Take heed lest you limit the faithful Promiser to your own time; nor think the blessing comes too late, if you see it not through the dim glass of earthly vision." Perhaps many of the prayers we now found on the promise of God, may not be evidently answered ere we die; if so, let the thought of this great cloud of witnesses, who "all died in faith," keep our trust buoyant and strong.

3. They live now in faith. A little light is here thrown upon the present state of those

“not lost, but gone before.” With them faith is still in exercise, not yet turned to sight; they are still expecting “some better thing.” But the happiness of that state is, that faith is now unmixed with unbelief; it is not contending with sense, not maintaining a struggle of grace against nature, but faith calm, triumphant, God-glorifying. And do not those believers on the other side of Jordan encourage us to trust on, trust ever?

4. They are waiting until we who follow after shall be “made perfect” with them. No wonder they are such interested spectators of our progress! Their own share of the promise cannot be fully realized until we join their ranks; until God’s elect shall be gathered from the four winds, their discipline ended, their course fulfilled, and they all prepared to be glorified together with Christ Jesus.

And oh, we think they must often be saying to us, on their own account, as well as ours,—

“Haste ye on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven’s eternal day’s before you,
God’s own hand shall guide you there.”

Yes, we are "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses," who all testify that He is faithful who hath promised.

"Ye know not what ye ask."

Was it then presumption's prayer,
That I might Thy glory share?
Did I rashly, blindly seek,
Prompted by ambition speak,
When I cried, "*Lord let me be
Perfectly conformed to Thee?*"

Reverently would I look
Through the record of Thy Book;
Trace each step Thy manhood trod,
To the throne prepared of God;
Bethlehem's manger, Calvary's cross,
Shame and sorrow, pain and loss,
Conflict with the powers of ill,
With estrangèd human will:
Well might mortal spirit shrink,
From the cup which Thou did'st drink!

Thoughtless words by brethren spoken,
Hearts less loving oft have broken,
But Thy tenderness was met
With returns more wounding yet;
Scorn, and hate, and treachery,
Flung their keenest shafts at Thee.

Of the crowds who once professed
By Thy favour to be blessed,
Wrung with sorrow Thou hast viewed
The departing multitude,
While the few, a meagre band,
Linger still to clasp Thy hand,
And to these I hear Thee say,
“ *Will ye also go away* ” ?

O my Saviour, Thou hast known
What it is to stand *alone*,
By the nearest to be left,
Of the dearest to be reft :
And such bitter grief may be
In the cup I ask from Thee.

Chills my heart and pales my cheek,
While I see Thee lone and weak,
Watching thro’ a dismal night,
On the dark, cold mountain-height,

From each sheltering homestead driven,
Praying 'neath the spreading heaven :
Yet a homeless lot may be
In the cup I ask from Thee.

In temptations sharp and sore,
Such as man ne'er felt before,
Thou, the Father's Holy Child,
Rising pure and undefiled,
First resisting unto blood,
Hast a more than conqueror stood :
And temptations sore may be,
In the cup I ask from Thee.

But my nature is allied
To carnality and pride ;
He who had no part in Thee,
Finds a wicked heart in me :
Jesus ! Jesus ! may I dare
Urge again my former prayer ?

Called to suffer shameful wrong,
Weakest found, who art most strong,
From the cruel cross and grave,
Willing not Thyself to save ;

Turning from a mother's tears,
From disciples' helpless fears,
In the hour of direst ill
Bowing to Thy Father's will :
Full of awe, I trembling see
Such a cup held out to me,
Hear Thee whisper, "*Suppliant, think !
Canst thou, canst thou, with me drink ?*"
Lord, the answer is not mine—
Read it here—the words are Thine—
"*Trust,*" Thou sayest, "*trust in Me,
I am thy sufficiency*" !

Baptism in affliction's wave,
Heavy cross, or early grave,
Broken friendships, lonely hours,
Conflict with infernal powers :—
"Flesh and heart" at these may fail,
"Grace" doth over all prevail.
Not presumption moves the prayer,
That I may Thy glory share ;
Not a blind, ambitious will,
Prompts the cry more urgent still,
"*Jesus ! Master ! let me be
Perfectly conformed to Thee*" !

But to that enquiring word
"Canst thou suffer with thy Lord" ?
Faith shall answer, "Son of Man,
Holding by Thy hand, I can."

"*Him that dwelt in the bush.*"—DEUT. xxxiii. 16.

REFERENCE is doubtless made here, by Moses, to the "bush" which he had seen in the wilderness, burning with fire, and yet not consumed; a type, probably, of the "church" then in Egypt, and afterwards in the wilderness, continually exposed to trial and suffering, yet preserved from destruction, because "God was in her." And supposing such interpretation of this "great sight" correct, we may, with equal propriety, carry the comparison through all ages; the church of Christ in our own day being no less really a witness of that Divine Presence, which alone can preserve her from destruction amidst so much attack from without and affliction within.

And, in like manner, since the church, as a whole, may be said to represent each of her members in particular, we may take the "bush" as illustrating individual experience—yours, it may be, dear reader, and mine.

1. The "bush" was a thing of earth, and yet God "dwelt" in it. He that is "higher than the heavens," who "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," condescended to manifest His presence in one of the lowliest objects of His creation.

Is there not something suggestive of the Gospel in this selection of a "bush," rather than of a stately tree? Is there not here a hint, a dim fore-shadowing of that wondrous stooping, when Jesus was not merely "found in fashion as a man," but "took upon Him the form of a servant"? This is also in beautiful harmony with the general procedure of Divine sovereignty. Not many mighty, wise, or noble of this world are chosen to exhibit the transforming power of indwelling holiness, but the weak and foolish "little ones" are often called to be temples of the living God. We, it may be, resemble the

"bush," even in the estimation of our fellow men, so far as lowness of estate and personal worthlessness are concerned, yet our littleness offers no hinderance to the abode of God within us.

2. The "bush," though burning, could not be consumed, because God was there.

A soul "without God in the world," is dead, and no power, save the regenerating Spirit, can vivify it. The soul in which God dwells is alive, and no power can destroy its life. Jesus declares Himself to be "the Life"; and then goes on to say, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "Because I live, ye shall live also." No amount of tribulation, no seven-times-heated furnace can consume the life of one in whom the Eternal Life has fixed His dwelling.

Oh, when this assurance is brought to bear upon our individual experience, how full of power it is to make enduring, protracted or even constant suffering!

3. The flame which played so threateningly

around and within the "bush," was itself the evidence of a present God. A common thorn or bramble of the desert became a grand and glorious object as soon as it shone with the brilliance of that wondrous Shekinah. Moses drew near to "see this great sight." And so we learn the lesson, that whenever suffering of any kind tends to brighten and beautify the character of the sufferer, those very pains, that very sorrow, are proofs that God is dwelling in the tried one. And thus it is that the "consuming fire" which He brings to exercise and refine His loved children, does make of them a glorious "spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." We enter with something like awe into the chamber of a suffering saint, conscious of a Presence there which makes it "holy ground."

"The goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush."

DEUT. xxxiii. 16.

OUR dear old English dreamer, John Bunyan, might well choose the name of "Goodwill" to

represent Him who stands at the very entrance of our spiritual course, to welcome and encourage the early steps of our discipleship. I suppose he took the name from this passage.

We look back from to-day on the incidents of our spiritual life, and compare our experience and our degree of actual knowledge with the shadowy imaginings and unsatisfied longings of many hearts around: how can we account for the difference? Only by ascribing our present and assured hope to God's "goodwill" toward us.

It chose us to be brought to the knowledge of His grace in Christ Jesus; it blends and expresses itself in all the training and restraining discipline of this present time; it brings us the occasional gleam of joy which makes us sing, and the abiding trust which shines even through our frequent tears.

And the same "goodwill," changeless and enduring, looks on us as heirs of glory, and prepares for us a rest and bliss "passing knowledge."

What harm can the malignity of Satan accomplish against those who are sheltered by

God's "goodwill"? The tempter may try his worst upon us, but he knows that even for this liberty "his time is short"; and he cannot do more than *try*. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy," may the tried one say, "though I fall I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."

MY OWN C.,

Many years ago there was a poor invalid who, from all I can learn of his case, suffered in many respects similarly to yourself. In these particulars especially—that he was extremely feeble, and had to maintain a reclining position during a long and weary time—his experience was the same as yours is at present; and perhaps other points of sympathy might be added to make the story of his life yet more interesting and encouraging to you.

There were some circumstances which rendered him an object of peculiar commiseration. In addition to his own pains of body, he was for the most part placed in the position of an

hospital patient, in the midst of fellow-sufferers, and compelled to see on every side the reflection on other pallid faces of the disease and depression which marked his own. This in itself must have been a sore affliction ; but it was even less trying than was the constant disappointment of his hope, which rising ever as he saw one after another of the sad group depart healed and rejoicing, sank lower and lower as years passed by and brought no relief for him.

Summer succeeded spring, autumn faded into winter, and still the sick man lay wearily on his couch, longing for the day which should restore him to active life again, or perhaps wishing in his heart that he might die. But death did not come at his request, and the thirty-eighth year of his illness found him still on his lowly couch, in the same attitude of "*waiting.*"

But *it is written*, "they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength"; and this poor sufferer was waiting on the Lord. He was yet lying in the place where it seemed most likely relief would be found, and thus

seeking to use the only means within his reach; and the absence of all irritation and bitterness in his answer to the gentle address of a stranger who came to visit him, proved, I think, that he was learning patience *by looking up*. How else could he learn it?

Ah, if there was a case in which one might imagine God had forgotten the cry of the humble, we should probably find it here. The thoughts of sadness, the disappointed hopes, the apparently unanswered prayers, the thirty-eight years of lonely invalidism,—*had* God forgotten to be gracious? Oh no, no; the Son of God even *Jesus* came to tell him so. The message of healing, so ardently hoped for, so patiently awaited, was entrusted to no mere angel; the Saviour brought it direct from heaven: the sick man heard and lived.

Dearest C., let the simple story of the impotent man at Bethesda cheer you as you also wait and pray; for the same Jesus comes to his sick ones now, and He *will* appear to them that wait for Him.

Yours in the *fellowship of waiting*.

MY OWN DEAR C.,

Opening "the Book" in search of a message for you, my eye fell at once on the latter clause of PSALM cv. 19—"The word of the Lord tried him." Turn to the passage, dear, and read from verse 17 to verse 22.

You will see that the reference is to the experience of Joseph, and will, I think, share my opinion that its tenor goes to point out the unheard, but very real, voice of God secretly ordering for a specific purpose, all those vicissitudes which *seemed* so entirely to spring from the perverted human will of those around him.

But if "the word of *the Lord*" had not gone forth, the word of his brethren could not have sold him into slavery; the word of Potiphar's wife could not have consigned him to a criminal's cell. It was "the word of the Lord" which "tried him" by the analyzing process of adversity, sifting his faith, exposing his integrity to a "burning fiery furnace" of temptation; and exemplifying the method by which "every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit."

And equally was it "the word of the Lord"

which "tried him" in the school of prosperity. The word of Pharaoh's chief butler had vainly sought to befriend the innocent condemned, had not the Father of his spirit said, "It is enough; now release to me mine own." Even the word of Egypt's proudest one could not have exalted him to be "next unto himself," had not "the mouth of the Lord spoken it." So much for the unseen hand, the unheard voice, which for us, as for Joseph, move the mysterious wheels which bear us on to our final home.

And now for the blessed sunbeam which casts its brightness on those very mysteries—"the word of the Lord *tried him*,"—*tries us*. Is it not a great benefit to be "*tried*"? What if we were spared all testing here, and eternity shewed us to ourselves as base metal after all? Oh, Father, let Thy word *try* us *now*, for Thy love's sake; and enable us to stand the test as Joseph did, whatever that word may appoint!

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I do not think I can better cater for your need to-day, than by leading your thoughts to the precious assurance contained in the words of PETER, 1st epistle, 1st chapter and 5th verse. He has just been referring to the bright and incorruptible inheritance which (he says) is "reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

The idea which seems so peculiarly comforting for your present circumstances is that of the "keeping" here spoken of. You often pray to be *kept*, dear—kept in the hour of temptation, in the bitterness of privation, in the pressure of that "tribulation" which is to bring to light the pure grain of your Christian fruitfulness.*

Well, here is the assurance, that you *are*

* The figure is suggested by the etymology of the word "tribulation," which is derived from the Latin word *tribulum*, a "thrashing sled," consisting of a wooden platform, studded underneath with sharp pieces of flint or with iron teeth.

"kept," and that in a way which defies all danger. For if "the power of God" be employed to keep you, what can disturb the safety of your soul?

Peter says this "keeping" is effected by the power of God, "*through faith*." Now he does not mean to say that the safety of the "keeping" depends on the measure of your faith; because that would be to make you in some sense your own keeper. But he represents *God's power* as the means and guarantee of your safety, and *your faith* as the application of this assurance to the comfort of your tried soul.

And then the apostle says you are kept "unto salvation." It is written of the wicked, that they are kept or *reserved* "unto judgment"; and this expression will serve as a contrast to throw light upon our text. It points to the day when the soul's circumstances shall be irrevocably declared, and when the "end" of God's keeping and of our faith shall be seen in our full "salvation."

Ah, it is salvation you are kept for; you shall stand as strong in *that* day as if you had

never known the weakness of *this* day; and shall hold up your head with joy to find that you have, all through your earthly pilgrimage, been "kept by the power of God," as one of His chosen and redeemed saints. Let this assurance shed light upon your soul, and believe me as ever,

Yours affectionately.

"He hath put a new song in my mouth."

Ask ye why my song doth rise
Jubilant and ringing,
Joyous message to the skies,
From a glad heart winging?
Is it matter of surprise
That a Christian should be singing?

Say ye that my lot is drear,
Poor and mean my dwelling;
That affliction may be near,
Earthly joys dispelling?
Safe in Christ, I do but hear
Music in the tempest swelling.

Even sorrow makes me sing,
 Though the note be lower,
For through grief my Lord doth bring
 To the glorious hour ;
And it is a happy thing
To be finding out His power !
Life to me is ever bright,
 Bring it joy or sorrow,
Since a never-fading light,
 From His love I borrow ;
Even death's approaching night,
Ushers in a heavenly morrow.
Song of mine can ne'er express
 Half the exultation
Of a soul whose wretchedness
 Welcomed that salvation,
Which the Saviour's matchless grace
Wrought for every land and nation !
Jesus' heart I seem to see
 Agonizing, riven,
That *my* sins, through mercy free,
 Might be all forgiven ;
And the cross of Calvary,
Opens up *my* way to heaven !

I am saved ! oh, help me praise
Him who did deliver !
Heaven is mine ! oh, help me raise
Anthems to the Giver !
“ Worthy is the Lamb whose grace
Hath redeemed my soul for ever ” !

Marvel not, but aid the song !
Christians, join the chorus
Of the bright and ransomed throng
Who have gone before us—
“ Blessing, glory, power belong
To the Lamb whose love is o’er us ” !

Learning thus from day to day,
Hymns of Heaven’s own choir,
Soon our listening Lord will say,
“ Loved ones, come up higher ” !
And in full harmonious lay,
All earth’s feeble notes expire !

MY BELOVED C.,

How cheering it is to find on our pilgrim-path waymarks and milestones to betoken our progress, and incite fresh hope of soon reaching our desired home !

For as we go along, the path seems so similar to that we have already traversed, and day after day brings so little novelty of feature to the surrounding scenery, and so little change of experience to us who pace slowly on, that, but for such reminders, we might almost imagine ourselves to be walking in a circle, making no real way, though ever journeying. Does it not sometimes seem to you, dear, as if your life went on and on without advancing ? *I* must confess to such feeling very often.

But oh, how sweet to find to-day a sign-post pointing forward, and declaring "Now is our salvation *nearer* than when we believed" ! (Rom. xiii. 11.)

Let us glance backward to the time of our first faith. We look through months and years, and these present a far more chequered aspect now than they did when we passed through day by day.

We have crossed, and that on foot, several broad streams; they did not overflow us, although we were greatly afraid. We have not these to pass through any more, for He who leads us never turns back.

We have sounded the depths of many a miry slough, and by the "help" of the Mighty One have come out on *this* side, not harmed, only distressed, by the struggles. These are behind us, and we shall sink in them no more.

Hill-tops, too, rise in our retrospect; peaks, from whose elevation we have joyfully gazed around and forward, and breathed freely the pure air of prayer and praise; and between these lie the valleys of humiliation, temptation, and suffering, whose memories are so fresh, so like the present, that we are apt to think our route lay *all* in valleys.

All this distance is past, and we are nearer the "end of our faith, even the salvation" we so desire.

"Oh, sweetly solemn thought to ponder o'er and o'er,
"We're nearer home to-day than ever we were before."

Yes, "salvation" from *sin* is "nearer"; we are coming to the "spirits of the just made perfect." Are we not growing in hatred and jealousy of sin as we approach the holy place of holy beings?

Yes, "salvation" from *suffering* is "nearer"; we are coming to the end of sorrow, of pain, of distress. Are we not more patient now that "a little while" is written on our trials?

Oh, dear Master, loving Saviour, Thou hast carefully told us of the cross, lest we should faint when it rested on our shoulders; and we have found Thy cautions and Thy promises alike true and faithful. Thou hast bidden us prepare for more trouble yet; but to keep up our hope, and encourage our progress, Thou hast said, "Then cometh *the end*"! Aye, ours is no aimless striving, no unrequited suffering; there will be no disappointment in eternity, for "Then *cometh the end*."

Let us comfort one another with these words, for "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Ever yours in Jesus.

"I will wait until my change come."

Gracious Saviour, for my change
Trustfully I wait ;
Nothing painful, nothing strange
Forms my future state :
Living, Thou dost dwell with me ;
Dying, I shall live with Thee !

Here, my soul doth find her joy
In Thy work and will ;
There, Thou canst her powers employ
For Thy glory still ;
Matters little *where* I move,
Serve below, or sing above.

Here, Thy presence makes my home
Redolent of heaven ;
There, when to Thy house I come,
Cleansed of all earth's leaven,
Home's best treasures I shall find,
Only sin is left behind.

Here, the weal of friends around
Oft my thoughts doth fill ;
There, on higher, holier ground,
I shall love them still ;

Loving more, as more I see,
How their souls are loved by Thee.

Here, a little rising cloud
Sometimes clothes with dread
That last hour when dear ones crowd
Round my dying bed :
There, the partings come no more,
Only greetings are in store.

Gracious Saviour, during life
All my strength and stay !
Oh, in nature's final strife,
Let me hear Thee say :
" Living, I have dwelt with thee ;
" Dying, thou shalt live with Me " !

MY OWN DEAR FRIEND,

Did you ever ponder over those remarkable words of Paul, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"? Looking at the general tenor of the epistle to which these words form a conclusion of singular import, it seems that the apostle, "troubled" at the errors brought by false teachers among

his Galatian converts, seeks to deepen in the minds of these an impression of the Divine "authority" by which he held his apostolic commission. And having again and again assured them that he "received not" the gospel "from man," and bringing forward circumstances of his preaching and practice to confirm this statement, he goes on to re-iterate the great truths he had presented before; and finally, as a sort of "ocular demonstration" which could not be gainsaid, he declares that in his very "body" he bears the "*marks* (tokens, seals) of the Lord Jesus."

I suppose we shall not differ as to the allusion here: was it not to the physical suffering, the scourging, the stoning, the many "perils" enumerated in 2 Cor. xi. 25, 27?

These trials had left their traces in the "flesh" of the great apostle; none could help seeing that he had been a sufferer. And those sufferings were known to be braved and borne for *Christ's* sake—they were "marks of the Lord Jesus."

Again, Paul had an abiding "thorn in the flesh," an affliction which was so sore as to

evoke continued supplication for its removal. But the Lord whom he entreated did not so grant his cry—the “thorn” remained, and was endured by the “sufficient grace” of the Hearer of his prayer. And thus his bodily infirmity, or perhaps his mental depression, became another “mark of the Lord Jesus,” another sign and seal of discipleship. What a beautiful idea to attach to the afflictions of a Christian !

In a yet farther sense its appropriateness appears. To be a sufferer is to share the *experience* of the Lord Jesus ;—to be a patient and willing sufferer is to share the *spirit* of the Lord Jesus. Is there not a wonderful transmutation of sorrow and pain into joy and peace in this view which St. Paul suggests ? Shall we not learn to wear our “fetters” with something like a holy “boasting,” when we feel them to be the “marks of the Lord” ?

“Precious Jesus, own us as Thine, and conform us to Thy likeness, and make us perfect—all through *suffering*, if Thou wilt. Honour these bodies of ours by setting Thy marks upon them ; only lead us so to regard

our sufferings as that we may recognize their meaning and preciousness"!

Ever your loving friend.

A bright Sabbath be yours, my beloved friend! Bright with the beams of heaven which penetrate *both* sides of the street at once, and make that which, to our outward eye, seems like shade, as radiant as was the cloud resting above the tabernacle of old. Bright with the smile of that ineffably lovely countenance which is bent over us who have our eyes divinely opened, in peculiar nearness this day. Bright too with joy of heart, as the quiet of your room is broken by those sweet words of blessing begun long years ago, on that last day of His earthly sojourn, and carried up into heaven, there to be solidified, and drop down to us who listen, in dew-like freshness and comfort.

What *does* Paul say? "*If* there be any consolation in Christ"! *If—if?* Why, we *know* there is; we have felt it; we feel it

to-day. "*Any* consolation"? Why there is *fulness* of consolation, exhaustless, infinite. Yes, and better than that, there is consolation that will bear breaking up into little bits, to fit in just those creeks and crevices of our hearts which feel empty, waste and desolate. It is not always the infinite that seems to suit us best; the idea is sometimes too vast and general for us. But the consolation that is in Christ is apportioned to our need, enters our believing hearts a little at a time, according as we grasp it; and we find out that it is infinite just from the fact that the supply never fails our demand.

And yet it was not about Paul's "if" that I meant to write, although I am sure it is worth writing and thinking about; but I intended to set before your eyes and ears (may the Good Spirit open them wide!) the ascending and blessing Saviour. "And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."—LUKE xxiv. 51.

We were there; you and I were among the blessed ones; for does He not expressly say,

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word”? Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified before us; in the persons of our representative apostles we have seen Him die, rise, ascend for us. The music of His benediction in sweet and gloriously-unfinished cadence has thrilled our ears. Say, have we not a theme for praise, a sight for faith to grow fresh by, a love-whisper from the Lord Himself to listen to, which are far more to us than all sanctuary privileges?

For lack of these, *is* there *any* consolation in Christ? Answer, O our souls!

“It is good for me to draw near to God.”

PSALM lxxiii. 28.

BECAUSE,

1. While I stand at a distance, I do but see His hand; when I “draw near,” I behold His heart. Close by, I see that the heart of Love moves the hand of Power.

2. While I stand at a distance, it seems as if He were governing the *many*, unmindful

of the *one*; when I “draw near,” I see that He is still making all things work together for *my* good.

3. While I stand at a distance, I behold my God and my King; when I “draw near,” the Spirit of adoption leads me to discern the smile of my reconciled and tender Father.

4. While I stand at a distance, I see the God of heaven sitting on the throne of His holiness; when I “draw near,” God manifest in the flesh draws near to me (Jas. iv. 8), and I feel His touch and hear His voice as those of a “Brother born for adversity.”

Therefore,

5. While I stand at a distance, “My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of Thy judgments”; when I “draw near,” “My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit doth rejoice in God her Saviour!”

"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

Where shall I weary rest?

Where, oh where?

Where, but on Jesus' breast?

There, *only* there!

None but He can e'er redress

Wrongs that on my spirit press.

In His heart and in His ear

I can tell my secret care—

There, *only* there!

Where shall I sinful flee?

Where, oh where?

Where, but to Calvary?

There, *only* there!

Nought but Jesus' blood alone

For my sins could e'er atone,

But the load of guilt and dross

Vanishes before His cross—

There, *only* there!

Where is the "Friend indeed"?

Where, oh where?

Still to Jesus points my need—

There, *only* there!

He at all times showeth love,
Nature's tenderest ties above,
Changing not in heart and mind;
And my soul's desire I find

There, *only* there!

Where is my "home, sweet home"?

Where, oh where?

Where, but beyond the tomb?

There, *only* there!

Sin and sorrow hover round
Fairest spots of earthly ground;
Joy unbroken, perfect love,
Bloom in that bright land above—

There, *only* there!

MY PRECIOUS C.,

Here is a key-note for your Sabbath song—"Christ in you the hope of glory." (COL. i. 27.) We have been examining for some time past the foundations of our faith and hope, rejoicing to find these sound and steadfast, because laid in Christ. It is now time to look at the superstructure which rises

upon these firm foundations ; to look up, even to the top-stone of all, which shines as a polished gem in the very heaven of heavens.

"Ah," say you, "that is carrying the figure beyond me ; you forget there are clouds between my vision and heaven. That top-stone is an object of *faith*, not of sight." Not at all, dear C. ; that top-stone is "glory" ; that "glory" is as much vested in Christ, as is the "grace" you have so long seen in Him ; and Christ is "in you," so that the same eyes which see the grace may see the glory too.

But, while "grace" lies behind us, so that in looking upon it we turn our eyes back as far as the cross of Calvary, "glory" is before us, and we must keep looking straight forward in order to enjoy the sight of its brightness.

Having "Christ" *in* us, glory is as surely ours as grace is. "The Lord will give grace *and* glory," not this without that, but both, the one introducing us to the other.

Let the last and crowning gift be your theme of praise to-day, dear, and you will find "glory begun below."

Ever your affectionate friend.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As I glanced just now through the "museum" of precious things which is furnished for our study in ROMANS iii.—vi., my thoughts were stayed by the words, "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." (vi. 9.) How very fruitful in lessons for living and for dying is this subject of resurrection.

Stimulus to live and walk looking up bravely and hopefully, to aim high, to despise the things which belong only to earth and time, and to be as those who feel the "power of an endless life"—this is one of the fruits of our grand belief.

Encouragement to endure the afflictions of passive life, to bear up beneath the pangs of bereavement and sorrow, because of the freedom from all these to which we expect a glorious resurrection will introduce us—this is another valuable result of our bright "hope of glory."

And oh! what light for the darkened hour of dying we borrow hence! "Through death to life" is our motto now, and will be our watchword then; for we expect *so* to live as to render the present life a mere type and

shadow to look back upon; just as now we who possess gospel revelation look at the "dispensation" of old Testament times.

But in thus enlarging on the topic so full of personal interest, our own resurrection, I have advanced a little from the text. It speaks of that glorious fact which is the very foundation and guarantee of our hope. "*Christ*, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." How consoling is this truth to us even now, apart from the hopes we found upon it!

You and I shall never know the anguish of losing our *dearest* Friend by death; we shall never, like the loving women who stood once by His cross, have to look upon the pallid face and stiffened limbs of the One we most cling to; never visit a sealed sepulchre, and think how "all our hope lies low with Him,"—nay, that can be "*no more*"! "This same Jesus" we only know as Him who "liveth and was dead." He will *always* live for us. Is it not sweet to think of this? And on this return of His resurrection-day we may dwell upon the sweet thought with especial propriety, and "rejoice, believing."

I trust you will enjoy a very happy and profitable Sabbath, and that "peace" which none but they who feel it know.

Ever yours.

*"The Lord is my Strength and my Shield!
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;
therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with
my song will I praise Him."*—PSALM xxviii. 7.

OH, dear C., how sweet it is once more to blend with yours my own Sabbath tribute of "humble and hearty thanks" to Him who has given us another Ebenezer on our way home! Well may *I* place at the top of this page those glowing words of grateful experience; and *you* would be ready to challenge at once any assumption on my part of a better claim to use them than your own.

Nay, we cannot be rivals in what we *owe*; but let us ever emulate and stimulate each other in what we render of gratitude and love!

Thank God we can both say of our present state, "The Lord *is* my Strength and my Shield"! Physically, mentally, spiritually, we are very weak; perhaps few who look on our outward appearance would expect a "song" from either; but the Lord is Omnipotent, and thus omnipotence is *ours*. We are beset by many adverse influences without and within, sometimes almost tempted to think all things are against us; but from this unbelieving thought, and from the trials which lead to it, the Lord is our Shield—that is why we do not "fall by the hand of our enemy."

How joyful is our retrospect, also, of the *past*—"My heart trusted in Him and I am helped"! Sometimes we have borrowed strength from the experience of others. "Our fathers trusted in Thee and were delivered."

But oh! 'tis sweeter far to look
Along the leaves of memory's book,
And often in its pages see
"Here the Lord's mercy came to *me*!"

Therefore "let our hearts" greatly rejoice,
and with our song let us praise Him to-day.

“ My Belored is mine.”

My Jesus ! teach these trembling lips
To speak that sweetest name ;
And linger fondly on the sound
Which doth Thy grace proclaim.

My Jesus ! from the guilt and grief
Once pressing on me sore
My Saviour Thou, the Lamb once slain,
Living for evermore.

My Jesus ! let a weary heart
Pour out to Thee its grief,
Not lonely, if Thy gentle voice
Breathe comfort and relief.

My Jesus ! oh, I sorrow most
The love to Thee so cold,
The faith so easily removed
From her firm steadfast hold.

My Jesus ! I but looked aside,
And missed Thy wonted smile,
And unbelief rushed quickly in
To hold my heart the while.

My Jesus ! then I could not dare
To call Thee mine, and yet
The love which made me once so glad
I could no more forget.

My Jesus ! never did I less
Deserve Thy love than now,
So fickle proved, so weak, so vile,
Fallen so very low.

Yet, Jesus ! never did I more
Deserve Thy love than now ;
'Twas for no grace of mine that first
Thou didst that love bestow.

Dear Jesus ! to her wonted rest
Thou bid'st my soul return ;
Close to Thy tender bosom pressed,
She will forget to mourn.

Aye, sighing here must flee away,
Joy through her sorrow shine,
One song upon her lips shall stay—
“ My Jesus, *ever mine* ” !

MY BELOVED C.,

I have returned, in the course of my morning readings, to the beautiful and minute description of Solomon's temple, which has already furnished us with some sweet and profitable thoughts. And I would fain offer you, dear, another suggestive passage from the same history—"The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."

—1 KINGS vi. 7.

How strikingly this incident seems to typify that process by which the "living stones" of God's spiritual temple, hewn from the quarry of earth and nature, are prepared for final adjustment in that eternal world where nothing unfinished or imperfect may enter in.

These "stones" were chiselled and polished and fitted each for its own position, apparently in or near the very place where they had lain in huge, ungainly masses. Just so *we* are kept in the world, and amid the same surroundings as before God said in our ears "Thou shalt be

Mine," and we are *here* subjected to a prolonged and often painful process of preparation.

The sound of the tools which our Great Architect uses upon us may sometimes jar our present peace, and disturb and distress us—for instance, severe pain will have this effect. But when the temple itself is reared in eternity, there must be no jar, no sorrow, no distress—God has promised there shall not be. So that *these* being the necessary means to that happy end, must all be endured *now*; we must, like the stones of the temple at Jerusalem, be "made ready" before we be "brought thither."

Will it not be sweet indeed in that day, when earthly shadows are lost in heavenly substances, to find ourselves exactly fitted for the destined niche?—to feel that we produce no blemish as we join our kindred stones, but that with perfect precision the disciplining "hammer and axe and iron tool" of *these* days have wrought in us the beautiful design of God, and that we are the right stones in the right place?

May this thought help us, dear C., to bide

with patience the trials of earth, and hope
with assurance for the perfection of heaven!

Yours ever lovingly.

I think, my own C., it would be as much for our souls' comfort as for the glory of a faithful God, if we more frequently, nay, habitually, gave expression to our confidence in the assurances of good with which His Word abounds.

How much of the Psalmist's language is in this strain! Even those breathings of his which are full of out-poured sadness are lightened ere they close by a steady note of faith. Take for example PSALM cxlii., where every verse is as a cry from the depths; it ends with the words of firm trust—"Thou *shalt* deal bountifully with me." And again, in PSALM cxxxviii. 8, "The Lord *will* perfect that which concerneth me." These are but two instances selected just where my Bible lies open; but you will enjoy looking from psalm to psalm, and noting how compatible is

a state of deep sorrow from outward causes, or even from severe mental trial, with the existence of sincere confidence in God.

And see how David recognized the fact that *this confidence gains strength by expression*. The other evening, dear C., we were talking of the benefit which arises from the *utterance* of a holy resolution—(e.g.: “*I will* abide in the house of the Lord for ever”); and to-day I would have you couple with this the trustful assertion, “Thou *shalt* deal bountifully with me”—“The Lord *will* perfect that which concerneth me.”

In this way you will be going over the terms of the covenant between God and your soul; professing anew your resolution to cleave to Him in all experiences; and telling over to yourself the expectations you cherish from Him, ever more strongly convinced that “He is faithful who hath promised.” This is the way to honour God. He would have us *take hold* of His covenant” (ISAIAH lviii. 4, 5), and reckon on His bountiful dealings.

Let us seek more to cultivate this speaking, acting trust. Let us never forget that the

best part of our prayers have already been answered by promises ; and that it becomes us to mingle with each petition the principle, "*I believe in God.*"

Ever yours in Christian love.

"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."—COL. i. 2.

Is it not a wonderful thought that, in order to produce patience in us, and to enable us to suffer *long*, the Almightyness of God is put in requisition ?

It is a new and gentle aspect of that grand attribute of Deity which is here presented to us ; the omnipotence of God working patience in the long-tried sufferer. "My strength is made perfect in weakness," saith He ; and we know, although sometimes we forget, that His "strength" is "*all might.*"

Oh to remember this when we pray, that we may pray believing ! Oh to remember

this when protracted suffering has taught us how "small" is our own "strength," that we may rest in the assurance, "He giveth power to the faint"!

Well may Paul say, "His *glorious* power"! For how sublime is the thought that He who can and does supply *our* "need of patience," and sustains *us* to the very end of our most prolonged trial, is at the same time supplying the similar need of *all* His chastened children, and remaining in Almightyness ready to meet the demand of all who shall follow in the same path to heaven! •

But see—Paul speaks of "long suffering *with joyfulness*" as attainable through the communication of "all might." We feel this is high ground indeed to be taken by a poor human soul like that which is so often "disquieted within" *us*. But here we are warned to turn away our thoughts from what *we* are, and mete out our faith and hope by what *God* is. Shall Almightyness be able to carry us to the point of patient endurance, and avail not to make us *cheerful* beneath the trial? This were a limit of the Infinite. Oh, let us look

to our God more expectantly, framing our petitions after the example given in the passage before us; and believing that, although the future be as the past, or even more clouded still, yet, "according to His glorious power," Almighty Love will work in us the grace of cheerful patience also!

DEAREST C.,

To us who feel that the doctrine of vicarious atonement is the only one on which we could build an assured hope of future salvation, and a calm sense of present forgiveness, how full of value and importance is such a plain, downright statement as that Paul makes in 1 COR. xv. 3, "Christ died for our sins"! It is the greatest of all great truths, in few words; so few, that no effort of memory is needed to retain them, and so clear, that no course of demonstration by reasoning is required to throw light on their meaning.

The questions "how?" and "why?" are out of place when referred to a statement made by God Himself, as this is; we may just believe the fact, and let it work its peace-making results in our hearts.

"Christ died for our sins." Shall we, then, ever fall victims to the inbred sinful principles which might otherwise have led us on to everlasting death? Nay; "sin *shall not* have dominion over you," is a promise to which the death of Christ adds immeasurable weight.

"Christ died for our sins." Will He ever lose patience with us, though our sinning is oft repeated, and hourly felt a burden and grief to ourselves? Nay, surely, in that He laid down His human life (which was made finite) for the one purpose of redeeming, He pledged Himself to devote His Divine life (which is infinite and eternal) to the perfect accomplishment of that glorious work. As Mediator, He is as persevering, as unchanging, as He shewed Himself when on earth. Oh, dearest C., let us look more at Jesus as dying *for our sins*—it cannot fail to strengthen our peace, and stimulate our love. * * * *

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

We were talking on Wednesday of our conscious deficiency in those "fruits of righteousness" which we feel ought to abound in us as the result of a long course of discipline and education at our Father's hands. How sweet then to find as our provided Sabbath portion the assurance that "He giveth *more grace.*" (JAMES·iv. 6.)!

We trust that His Spirit working within us has indeed produced some gracious result; we know that our present feelings towards our Father and our Saviour are not those we naturally cherished; and we humbly thank Him who has thus "*begun* a good work" in us.

But our cry still is "My leanness! my leanness"! We feel we are not yet such plants as the Psalmist says are "fat and flourishing"; and we long for growth, rapid strong growth "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord"!

We read in the opening chapter of Mrs. Winslow's life that one of her relatives was long remembered by her oft-repeated cry, "Oh for more grace"! And we take up the sigh, and breathe it for ourselves into the ear of our

Beloved. He, presenting it with the incense of His own merits at the throne, sends down *now* His Holy Spirit to direct our eye and heart to the written answer which, in anticipation of our prayer, was sent long ago by the mouth of His apostle, "He giveth *more grace*."

Yes, dearest, He who gave the first gracious impulse which stirred our cold hearts into love, will give more energy to that love of whose feebleness we complain. He who taught us first to believe unto salvation, will give more breadth to our faith, more stability to our trust, more strength to our hope in Him. He who led us to some slight degree of acquiescence in that tribulation which worketh patience, will give more patient submission, more willing obedience, more assimilation to Him whom we follow through suffering. Is there not comfort in the promise "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance"?

Well may we, dearest C., "hold fast that we have," and take fast hold also of the "sure word" "He giveth more grace"!

"The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."—ISAIAH XXV. 8.

WE often hear this life of our probation described as a "vale of tears"; and experience proves the propriety of such an emblem. For we do mark our course with tears; and as we look back we can almost trace its windings and divergings by the *verdure* which those tears have nourished. Yes, *verdure*; I cannot but think that we shall review our sorrows as "fruitful seasons," our wanderings as having taught us circumspection, our pains as avenues to the love and sympathy of God. And thus the tears of weariness and penitence and grief, which we now shed so frequently, shall appear by-and-bye as blessed springs of fructifying waters.

But perhaps just now we are rather apt to connect the thought of tears with that which causes them, than with the effects which follow; and we seek pity and sympathy *whilst* we weep. "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle!" we say to God, invoking His attention and remembrance. "I have seen thy

tears," He softly replies; "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And the inmost soul of Jesus is moved at sight of His children's tears. (See JOHN xi. 33, 35.) Ah, we "know the proof of Him" who can "joy with the rejoicing, and with the weeping weep"!

Yet let us not linger self-pityingly on the theme of present sorrows, but look forward to that which lies beyond this "vale"; to the land of unmingled joy, unwearied activity, perfect, painless health, and purity without one stain to be wept over. There God shall no longer look upon the tears of His redeemed ones as part of the "all things" which work their good; but "He shall *wipe away* all tears from their eyes." (REV. vii. 17; xxi. 4.)

Oh, beloved, how tender the touch of Him, who, once Himself a "Man of Sorrows," is now "the joy of His people"! And *we* shall feel that touch, and *we* shall know that "fulness of joy" "soon, and for ever." Let us anticipate that day, and on every future tear a sunbeam of hope shall rest, imparting Heaven's

own colouring to that which is indeed only a thing of earth, since

“In heaven above no sin is found,
No weeping shall be there.”

“I am Thine ; save me.”

Lord, Thy grace provideth many
Arguments for saints to plead ;
None may silent be, nor any
Deem Thou hast forgot *his* need ;
But the plea my spirit praying
Doth to rest on most incline,
Is that word, so much conveying,
So much claiming—“I am Thine” !
Formed at first by Thy volition,
What is left for will of mine,
Save to blend in meek submission
With my Maker’s ? “I am Thine” !
From the moment of my being
Until now, Thy grace divine,
Over-ruling, over-seeing,
Hath preserved me—“I am Thine” !

Purchased by Thy life's out-pouring,
Sealed with the baptismal sign,
Well may I, redeemed, adoring,
Own, my Saviour, "I am Thine" !
To a love most deep and tender
Thou hast won this soul of mine,
And in unreserved surrender
Of myself, Lord, "I am Thine" !
Now to manifest Thy beauty
Of performance and design,
By a life of Christian duty,
Fit me Lord, for "I am Thine" !
To be ruled and guided ever
All my nature I resign ;
Keep the charge, dear Lord, and never
Cease to chasten—"I am Thine" !
To "be still" in darkest seasons,
And if light be slow to shine,
Trusting on, nor asking reasons,
Help me, Lord, for "I am Thine" !
Thine I am for life, and dying
Newly would the covenant sign,
Through eternity relying
On Thy love, since "I am Thine" !

How delightful, dear C., to us who long for the appearing of our beloved Lord, is the word of cheer which tells us "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (Rom. xiii. 12.)!

'Tis night, indeed, whilst yet we have to live on trust; whilst we have to listen to the voice of our unseen Beloved, and know His presence only by the gentle words of sympathy which sooth us into patience when suffering, and by the soft pressure which assures us that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

But the night is not now in its early stages; the steady hours advance, and day-break may be looked for with expectant hope.

Aye, even now we feel—do we not?—that faith is beginning to *know* her best Friend so well, that it seems as if light had already shewn her His glorious and gracious outline; as if she could dimly define His attitude of watchful love as He bends over our couch, and shares our time of humble waiting.

The "morning star" at least, has arisen upon us, and the depth of midnight is long past. Oh, let us hail the coming day—the day of His appearing! *We* are to be glori-

fied with Him then; *we* are to see Him, and be like Him too.

The day of His coronation as King of the whole earth "is at hand"; when from north, and south, and east and west, His subjects shall "flow together" with joyful accord to pay him regal homage. *We* shall join the song when "all the people praise Him"; and with no faltering tones! Then shall the fruits of every mission-field be presented to the Lord of all; and *we* shall see with joy what we sowed with prayers and tears. Then shall the "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," be united to her Living Head in everlasting bonds.

Dear C., "the day is *at hand*"—let us "lift up our heads, for now our redemption draweth nigh"!

Let us pray for the dawn, believing. And let us take care that we be found looking out, as servants that watch for their Lord!

Wishing you a happy day with Jesus,

Ever yours in Him.

" Watchman, what of the night?"

" The morning cometh."

OH ye who stand on Zion's towers,
Counting through tears the weary hours
Till shines the orb of day ;
Hail ye the earliest streak of dawn,
Fair promise of a glorious morn
Across yon mountain grey !

Weep ye because so slowly march
Those clouds which curtain now the arch
Of heaven's august expanse ?
Oh, stay your tears, and think how far
Beneath the clouds ye watchers are,
How distant is your glance !

Not slowly on and on they move
At His command, whose name is Love,
Whose faithful pledge we hold ;
Look eastward : doth no rising beam
Light up with soft and silvery gleam
The landscape dim and cold ?

It must not, cannot be delayed,
That day for which all days were made,
When He, the Sun, shall rise

With healing beams of righteousness,
With universal truth and grace,
On our delighted eyes :

When through the echoing earth shall ring
Anthems of welcome to her King,
Whom all shall know and love ;
No darkened place may then be found,
No cruel stains upon the ground,
But *peace* like that above !

O ye who stand on Zion's towers,
Sing, as ye watch the parting hours,
"The morn, the morn is nigh !"
That hopeful we who toil below
May haste the precious seed to sow
Earth's many waters by !

MY DEAR C.,

This is the last of another year's Sabbath notes, and in looking for a *seasonable* text, I was drawn to the sweet promise given to Daniel, and left on record for all who, like him, "trust in the Lord their God." "Thou

shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (DAN. xii. 13.)

We may well be content, dear, to let alone the workings of God's providence with reference to our few remaining days, so long as the end is sure to find us "standing in our lot."

You know the "lot" or portion of land which each tribe was to inherit in Canaan was appointed long ere their feet had touched the bounding Jordan, and when many chequered paths had yet to be traversed, of which they knew nothing. Just so our "lot" in the new Jerusalem above is marked already, and assured to us by the promise of our Fore-runner. We often look anxiously at the intervening steps—how many, how rough, we know not!—and we dread lest there be some turning aside, or some fall, which may cause us to "perish in the wilderness," without even a sight of the Promised Land.

But here is a promise absolute and sure, which looks to the very "end of the days," and guarantees that we *shall* be found in the place that is prepared for us, when all the trials that now mar our "rest" shall be for

ever past. Will not this help us forward in our new year?

"All's well that *ends* well," says the homely proverb.

"Surely I know," says the wise preacher, "that it shall be well with them that fear God."

That you, my beloved, may now "rest" on the promise of your Father, and thus close the year by "casting *all* your care upon Him," is the earnest prayer of

Your loving friend.

"*Having nothing, yet possessing all things.*"—

2 COR. vi. 10.

THIS is the last, and perhaps the most precious link in that interesting chain of paradoxes which Paul places as a girdle around the "new creature in Christ Jesus."

Strange to the ear of worldly wisdom would be the declaration, that to have *nothing* is a reason for joy and gratulation; to possess *all things* would seem a far more likely theme for song.

And yet in reviewing past, and examining present experience, I feel that the first clause of this great truth inspires my soul's first "Hallelujah" !

What was it, dear fellow Christian, which gave you and me the claim we put in long ago to a share in the benefits of Jesus' Atonement ? Was it not the discovery that those benefits were expressly and exclusively promised to those who had "*nothing* in their hand to bring" ? And was it not just when we felt most thoroughly conscious, that we were "poor and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked," that our last lingering doubt as to "fitness" vanished, and we looked to Jesus, believed and lived ? If we had had any sense of natural goodness, an array of works beyond the range of duty, we might have vainly sought a compromise which the gospel will not admit. Our "*something*" would have kept us out of the class for whom Jesus died. Oh, thank God that we had *nothing* to hinder our coming to Him for free grace !

But time has passed since then, His Spirit and His word have been instructing us. We

have grown in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. We have tried to lay up treasure in heaven, by shewing kindness to His little ones. We have sought to endure the cross with patience; moreover, we stand well in the esteem of our fellow Christians. Truly, we have failed greatly in all these particulars; but, so far as we do differ from ourselves of years ago, is it equally true now that we "have *nothing*"?

Ah, let us ponder this question well, for on its faithful answer hangs our very life. Free grace is not the beginning but the whole of salvation; and if at any period of our Christian profession, we cease to be "paupers," that fatal accession of property would cut us off from our divine inheritance.

Let us look backward again. Our spiritual knowledge is "not our own"; it is a stewardship in itself, of which we must give account. Our good works have been only wrought in obedience to our Master's command; and in His own words, we can but say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty." Our endurance of trial is

"not our own"; for if the strong arm of divine tenderness had been one hour withdrawn, that hour we had broken forth in unrestrainable repining. The good opinion of our fellows—what proves it but that they see some faint reflex of the Jesus who is dear to them, and love us for His sake?

Aye, happy are we "having nothing"! Thank God, we feel ourselves to be but "vessels" still, as empty and as poor as when first we cried,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling!"

This is the pledge of our interest in the
"Sinner's Friend."

"Stripped of all we called our own,
Rich in Christ, in Christ alone!"

"Blessed are the merciful."

"To have done this good deed will make music in my soul
at midnight."—GEORGE HERBERT.

It was a little deed and lowly,
A cup of water by the wayside given;
And he who gave it soon forgot; but holy
And loving hands made note thereof in heaven.

It was a word of kindness spoken
At the street corner as he passed along,
Nor heard the widow's blessing, faint and
broken,
Which seraphs caught, and mingled in their
song.

It was a momentary action,
Stooping to lift a little falling child—
And as he went his way in satisfaction,
He saw not that its guardian angel smiled.

It was a tear in secret falling,
When tongues of scandal told a brother's
shame;
But lo! a "watcher" at heaven's gateway
calling,
"Among the merciful write this man's name"!

He saw not, heard not, but forgetting
His own good deeds, went humbly on his way,
Scattering unconscious pearls, whose heavenly
 setting
Shall rank them gems in the all-testing day.

But when the world around him slumbered,
His wakeful spirit happy vigil kept,
By no dull care or grim remorse encumbered,
No daylight deeds to be in darkness wept.

Then through the silence softly stealing,
Celestial voices seemed to fill the room,
Heaven's estimate of earth's "small things"
 revealing,
And beams of glory chased the midnight gloom.

"Blest be the merciful, whose spirit
Hath wept in secret o'er a brother's sin!
He shall with saints in light a place inherit,
By love of God and angels welcomed in.

"Blest be the merciful, who seeketh
With kindly words to heal the widow's heart!
In his distressful hour 'tis God that speaketh,
And with sweet promise wipes the tears that
 start.

“Blest be the merciful, who giveth
With cheerful hand and prompt, at cry of need !
Approved of God, the action ever liveth,
And the good man is blessed in his deed.

“Blest be the merciful, who stoopeth
To aid the weakness of a babe of days !
Far higher than he asketh now or hopeth,
His Master shall that lowly servant raise.”

Thus sang the angels, while above them
A voice more sweet took up the harmony ;
*“Thou didst it unto these, but I who love them
Receive each kindness as ’twere done to me” !*

The choral ceased, and softly faded
Each glory-beam, and all the host was gone ;
Midnight’s deep gloom once more the chamber
shaded,
And in calm sleep lay God’s beloved one.

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.—ZECH. iii. 1-5.

THESE words may suggest a very pleasing and profitable study to the believer, who is able joyfully to say, “He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”: and a few

brief hints may perhaps assist you, my dear friend, in your Sabbath meditations thereon. With this hope let me invite you to notice—

1. There are three persons in this scene—

I. The angel of the Lord (and is not this Jesus?) sitting as a Judge between two contending parties. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

II. The sinner.

III. The accusing adversary, "Satan hath desired to have you," and failing to accomplish your destruction, tries to get your Judge to condemn you. He is called "The Accuser of the brethren." (Rev. xii. 10.)

2. There really is matter for the adversary to take hold of. The sinner is "clothed with filthy garments"—a most uninviting object for divine favour. His transgressions abound, and Satan has not to search far for crimes to lay even to the charge of God's elect. But

3. See how the charge is met, and by Whom. There is no denying that the accused is guilty; his filthy garments convict him; but these are at once removed under Satan's very eyes, and a change of raiment,

yea and even a "fair mitre" transform the convicted criminal into a justified and honoured servant. And this is done by the Angel Jehovah Himself (see verse 4); it is all His doing, for the sinner has not a word to answer his adversary, and stands silent before his Judge. Look at this picture, all illustrating the questions in Rom. viii. 33, 34, and the answers so boldly given there, and take shelter from the accusing foe, in the free grace of our Atoning Mediator. For this Jesus is to be our Judge when we stand, as Joshua did, within hearing of that eager Accuser's tale of our unworthiness.

"Thou hast known my soul in adversities."—

Ps. xxxi. 7.

THE sympathy of a friend is very sweet when, in our first great grief, we find how close a kindly heart *can* draw to us. But how unreserved is our confidence, how full of expectation our appeal to that sympathy which has, time after time, visited our privacy of mourning,

and seemed to know us most intimately when other friends were absent. Oh cannot you, beloved fellow-sufferer, now trustingly invite *Jesus* to your side, because He has known your soul in adversities? Not in one painful season merely has He visited you, but in many. Other friends may choose to come when you are at the brightest, because it is pleasanter to rejoice with the rejoicing, than to weep with them that weep; this One has come as if *born* for adversity; His soft voice sounding most naturally the plaintive soothing note of sympathy. May He be consciously present to you now, and evermore!

"We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."

DEAR friend, farewell! frail tenement of clay!
From thy kind shelter I must haste away
To gain at length that new celestial home,
Where thou, when time hath ceased, shalt
surely come.

E'er since together we have dwelt, the fear
Of parting thus has caused us many a tear ;
Yet now we sorrow not without a hope
Precious and firm, to bear our courage up.
Thou, tho' returning now to dust, shalt rise
New-formed, new-clothed, to join me in the
skies ;

"Sown in corruption," raised by Power Divine
In bright, immortal purity to shine :
Then clasped again in thy belov'd embrace,
I shall rejoice before my Father's face.
Go then, return thou to thy first estate,
The glorious consummation to await.
I, freed from bonds that shackled my desire,
Mount upward, burning with celestial fire,
Eager to learn, while still required to wait,
Those revelations of our future state
To which thy weakness, friend, could not attain,
And rendered all my strivings faint and vain.
I blame thee not, thou tabernacle frail !
That which is mortal was *designed* to fail,
And my impetuosity must be
Alike a hinderance and distress to thee.
But oh, the future ! unalloyed by sin,
Untouched by aught that is to earth akin,

Thro' faith made just, at perfect peace with
God,
And sanctified by Jesus' precious blood—
Together we shall reign, no more to part
Or know the pang of dissolution's smart!
No more a clog wilt thou be;—I no more
Shall vainly strive God's secrets to explore.
But praising Him of all our joy the source,
Unwearied we shall run our onward course,
And thro' eternity our song shall be,
“Friend, Father, Comforter, praise, praise to
Thee”!

“I have laid help upon one that is mighty.”—

Ps. lxxxix. 19.

I WRITE to you this day, beloved friend, under a peculiar sense of weakness, physical and mental too. Conscious of my own frailty, and feeling that a *reed* at all times, I am a “bruised reed” just now, the idea of any one leaning on *me* for help, seems more than I can bear, and I turn in search of support for myself. While I thus seek, I find for you as well, that our

God says "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." Oh, what a comfort to know that there never are times of languor and exhaustion to Him on whom we lean: "He fainteth not, neither is weary"! (ISA. xl. 28.) We never find Him sleeping from fatigue as once He slept during the lake-storm, nay, the very memory of that night keeps awake His sympathy and guardian care for us. He is mighty, we cannot lean too heavily on that unwearying arm; we cannot make too large demands upon His resources. He will never say "Go thy way for this time," never tell us that Himself needs rest. Oh is there not much to comfort us in the mightiness of our Jesus? How little we can understand of God! It is difficult to think of a Being who never tires, never sleeps, never suspends His activity for one moment. We compare the wearied brain of a statesman after one busy session; the anxious brow and weary limbs of a parent at the close of one day's providing for his little ones' support; the pale and languid countenance of her who watches through one long night the sufferer whom she loves; we compare such

scenes as these with Him on whom our help is laid, who governs all worlds, provides for "every living thing," watches day and night beside every sleeper's couch; and thus we learn a little of His might. It is might in *gentleness*, might exercised for good. "Mighty to save" is Jesus! And your help, and mine, is laid on Jesus, not by us, but by God Himself. Let us lean on Him, then "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"!

Precious Jesus, if on Thee
All my help by God is laid,
I would ever passive be,
And in each extremity
Thy salvation trust to see
Perfect thro' my weakness made!

May this posture of trust and love be ours,
at all times! Are we not generally "most
willing" when most weak?

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred, forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder : and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps :

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders : and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

** * * These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

And in their mouth was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God.”—REV. xiv. 1-5.

OUR chastenings for the present seem lengthened, and difficult to endure, but a glance at their final result should go far to reconcile us to one and all of them. Such a glance is

afforded us in the passage quoted above. It is a glorious picture of heavenly blessedness; and it is one of those sketches in which you and I, dear fellow Christian, have special interest, because it describes the glorified condition of "the redeemed from among men." Such as we are now therefore, once were they; such as they are now, may we hope to be. There are several particulars related of them which may well instruct and encourage us.

1. Every one of these was marked and acknowledged by the "Lamb" in the presence of His Father and the holy angels. Compare with this statement our Lord's words (LUKE xii. 8,) "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God": and see how faithful is the promise on which we are taught to count.

2. They were rejoicing with great joy, singing "as it were a new song," for the words of which we must probably look back to the first chapter and close of the fifth verse, a song of redeeming love, such as only *lost and saved* ones "can learn."

3. They are still followers of Jesus. Ah, beloved, at present we are apt to think only of following Him from cross to cross; but so blessed shall prove the final result of this humiliation, that we shall delightedly follow the same Leader in heaven, and *then* our progress will be from crown to crown.

4. They are perfectly holy. To us who mourn the sin which dwelleth in us far more than our present afflictions, this is the very climax of heavenly bliss, the full end of our salvation. The apostle James says "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." And of our sinless Lord it is written, "Neither was guile found in His mouth." Here we see (ver. 5) the very same words employed respecting the sanctified of earth. Is it not wonderful? And does it not strangely recall the saying of our Lord, "It is enough for the disciple that he be *as his Master*"? Oh, to be thus one with Christ in His holiness, is it not enough to compensate for the trials which must effect the change? They are "without fault":—in the eyes of finite men? of created angels? Oh, more than this—

before the throne of God. The *Holy One* shall find no fault in them—in us.

Oh, shall not our Sabbath song be, “Now unto *Him that is able* to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.”

“*Our light affliction which is but for a moment.*”

2 COR. iv. 17.

WHAT a blessing it is when one is exercised with “strong pain,” to know that it is the *only* pain one has to count upon! Through Jesus’ death *we* shall never know the meaning of those terrible terms in which the agonies of the lost are described—the fire, the worm, the *everlasting* torment. How unworthy of comparison are the chastenings we endure, with the just punishment from which we are freely delivered! Oh blessed salvation, precious Saviour!

"Ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

OH mourn not that she soon has gain'd
Her noblest, best desire !
The eager spirit, by affliction train'd,
A growth beyond "this mortal" had attain'd,
And from the bonds that chaf'd as they
 enchain'd,
 Craved to be "lifted higher."

Then He, who ever sits beside
 The chastening furnace-fire,
Beholding thus her faith completely tried,
And precious more than gold oft purified,
Spake, and Heaven's pearly gate was open'd
 wide,
 And she was "lifted higher" !

Oh, may a beam from that bright home,
 To which our souls aspire,
Thro' the new-parted clouds with solace come,
To cheer us while we linger near her tomb,
Until from earth's bereavements and earth's
 gloom
 We too are "lifted higher" !

“Chastened and not killed.”—2 COR. vi. 9.

How truly descriptive are these words of our present condition, dear companion in tribulation! Sincerely can we say with David, “The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death”! The idea of *killing* strikes us as *extreme*. There is nothing extreme in our Father’s dealings with His children:—all is measured, moderate, mild. God never chastens with caprice, never with haste, never as stirred by resentment. Men acting under such impulses, have inflicted undue correction on their offending children, and thus even “killed” them; such an instance has never occurred in God’s family-discipline, and *never will*.

It is one of the peculiarities of adoption, that the adopted ones are chastened. “If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” (HEB. xii. 8.) Satan never chastens *his* children; they know no rod of restraint, but grow up self-indulgent and vicious. His purpose is malevolent, and can best be effected by letting the foolish and ignorant beings whom he claims as

his own, rush unchecked in pursuit of lust and pleasure. *Our Father's* purpose is infinitely benevolent, and therefore He takes unwearying pains to train and restrain, curb and guide, chasten and instruct us. We, then, who feel ourselves to be enduring the chastening of the Lord, may take this very circumstance as a sure token that we are His own children.

Try, beloved, to stay yourself upon this precious thought. Like the bee which flies not hastily from flower to flower, but sucks until the honey be all drawn from each, do you apply to realise the fact of your own long chastening being a special and certain proof that you are the loved child of God. You often express a desire for *evidences* with which to drive away intruding thoughts of doubt: lay hold of this one, and do not pass from the thought of it until you have thoroughly taken possession of its comforting assurance.

"He hath known my soul in adversity."

YEA, though afflictions deep and numberless,
Have gathered o'er my soul,—
Still, Father, Thou hast been with me to bless
Each mighty billow's roll :
And often I have heard Thy "still, small voice"
Beyond the tempest's roar,
Enabling me in sorrow to rejoice,
And fear the storm no more !
Long hast Thou, Saviour, led my erring heart
To rest upon Thy love,
And taught my soul to choose that "better part"
Which never shall remove.
Oh ! bring me nearer to Thyself, my God—
Raise me from earthly things—
Let memory, when life's short path is trod,
Recall no wanderings !

*"And thou shalt be called by a new name,
which the mouth of the Lord shall name."—
ISAIAH lxii. 2.*

AMONGST the many promises which from their

very wording indicate the particular notice our God takes of every one of His people, there seems especial force in those which speak of His knowing them *by name*.

Thus, when Moses sought some assurance of the Divine goodwill, God said "I know thee by name." Again, when bidding the afflicted saint be of good cheer, He speaks thus: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." (Is. xliii. 1.)

God's knowledge of us individually being thus impressively denoted, I think there is yet a higher meaning in those passages which speak of His giving us a new name. "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name," &c. These, I think, pointedly refer to the adoption of us into His own family; for is it not the right of a Father to appoint his child's name?

David called his son's name Solomon, and God knew him by that name, as *David's son*. But He had said respecting Solomon, "He shall be *my son*"; and the prophet Nathan, acting under Divine inspiration, gave him the

name of "Jedidiah, beloved of the Lord."
(2 SAM. vii. 14 ; xii. 24, 25.)

Here on earth we are known as the children of various parents, and the names they give us are our only designation. Perhaps in heaven we shall be known only as the children of Him that sitteth on the throne, and each "be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name."

"To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."—ISAIAH xlii. 7.

It was specially predicted that one great work to which the Christ of God was appointed should be to "open the blind eyes." And although doubtless this prediction had reference to the miracles by which He attested His Divine mission, it has a far more extensive and valuable significance as applied to that spiritual sight which none of us would ever have possessed, but for the gift of the Holy

Spirit, "received" for us by Him who died and rose again. We owe it to Jesus that "whereas we were blind, now we see," as really as if a lost natural sense had been restored by the laying on of His hands. Let us stop and praise Him that we see at all, before we pursue the subject farther.

And now, thankful for that first opening of our *blind* eyes which let in the light of Heaven upon our souls, let us humbly acknowledge that we need, again and again, to have the same touch applied to our *sleepy* eyes, because they are apt to be so weighed down by the depressing influences of a carnal nature, that they often fail to see the heavenly objects God has placed all around for our comfort.

And while to our psalm of praise we add the prayer so needed still—"Open Thou our eyes!" let us consider what results we are to expect as the answer to our petition. The Bible presents several illustrations.

1. When cast down and discouraged because of untoward circumstances, cut off, perhaps, from the usual means of grace, "hungry and thirsty, our souls faint within us," the opening

of our eyes would shew us that there is no desert so barren but that God has made a "stream" to break forth there; no valley of humiliation so mournful, but that a "well" of living water springs amid the overhanging gloom.

So was it with Hagar in the wilderness. (GEN. xxi. 19.)

2. When consulting our own will in reference to some questionable course of conduct, we are soothing our consciences with the mistake that, because God has not distinctly forbidden it, we may safely venture, it only needs that our eyes be opened, and we shall see the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and may turn, and repent, and forsake our sin. Thus Balaam, when his eyes were opened, had proof that God was not on his side; and had he been a true servant of God, doubtless the desired result would have followed. (See NUMBERS xxii. 31.)

3. When we feel ourselves beset with foes; when temptations sharp and sore come in even to the soul; when earthly helps fail, and we say "All things are against me; I shall perish

by the hand of mine enemy," then the opening of our eyes would reveal "more than twelve legions of angels" engaged for our defence, the chariots of God and His horsemen. And faith thus turned to sight, would sing—"I will not be afraid, though an host should encamp against me; for the Lord goeth before me, the God of glory is my rear-ward." Thus was Elisha's servant comforted. (2 KINGS vi. 7.)

4. And at all times, walking by the way, conversing or meditating on the things pertaining to life; nay, even in the simple partaking of daily bread, if our eyes be divinely opened, we shall see Him whom our souls love verifying His own sweet words—"Lo, I am with you always."

Thus was it with the disciples at Emmaus. (LUKE xxiv. 31.) Let us pray, "Lord that our eyes may be opened"!

"As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing."—

2 COR. vi. 10.

ONE of the most valuable gifts that any person

can possess is to be able to turn from the shady side of an experience to its more sunny aspect ; and it is a fact perhaps too often forgotten, that every experience in Christian life has these two aspects. It is only as we realise and act upon this fact that we can endorse Paul's description of the Christian's double mood, "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." And yet the two are not incompatible, as Paul himself could prove, and as we who follow after may prove equally. There are some points, then, on which a Christian may cherish sorrow. Sorrow is not sin. Christianity is not stoicism ; does not check the flow of natural emotions, provided always they spring from pure and right sources. And thus we may be

1. Sorrowful on account of discovered sin ; while yet rejoicing in the assurance of pardon. Every sin of ours shows up the more brightly that surpassing grace which blots it out, and bears with the sinner ; it testifies anew to the value of an atonement which not only avails for "sins that are past," but also for their daily recurrence. Yet while rejoicing in grace

so rich and free, we cannot but be sorrowful at each remembrance of the sin.

And we may be

2. Sorrowful while fighting hard against the sinful susceptibilities of the flesh ; and yet rejoicing in the promise of complete sanctification. Paul gives vent to his sorrow on this account in Rom. vii., and yet with what a burst of joy does he sum up the Christian's hope in chapter viii. !

Or we may be

3. Sorrowful by reason of affliction, while yet rejoicing in the fruits which spring therefrom. The book of Psalms, many passages in the Prophets, and the whole life-history of our Saviour, confirm the apostle's expression, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." And we feel thankful for the "leave to cry" which the tears of Jesus give us ; we bow down our heads upon His bosom, feeling that the "Man of sorrows" is best fitted to sustain His stricken ones. "But afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." (See also 1 PETER i. 7 ;

JAS. i. 2-12; 2 COR. iv. 18: ROM. v. 3-5.) "Alway rejoicing" indeed must we be, if we bear in mind the promise, "I will purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." What though it must be done *by fire*? That it is done at all will set us rejoicing for evermore.

And we may be

4. Sorrowful for a guilty and careless world; yet rejoicing in the promises of its evangelization and conversion to Christ. This was the experience of our Blessed Master. His whole course was sprinkled with tears shed over the hardness and impenitence of those He sought to redeem; but the promise "I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession," often filled His soul with anticipative joy, and sustained Him amid present defeat and disappointment. And so, "like Master, like servants," *we* present to the world the strange character of "sorrowful yet alway rejoicing."

"Cause Thy face to shine."

VISIT Lord, with beam divine,
This benighted soul of mine ;
Chase the gather'd clouds away,
Turn the darkness into day ;
Shine, with radiant glory shine,
Light of Life ! Thou Saviour mine !

Kindled thus by grace within,
Shall my mission-work begin ;
Cleansing first each inward part,
Each affection of the heart ;
Then, from secret evil freed,
Shining forth in word and deed.

Jesus, Master ! let me be
Clothed with Thine own purity,
That my life may well attest
Truth in feeble words expressed,
And Thy light enfolding me
May attract the world to Thee !

Thus prepared, I will not fear
To proclaim Thee far and near ;

This my mission, this my joy,
This my life-long loved employ ;
Saviour ! while I work for Thee,
Bless the work—and oh ! bless me !

“ Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine ; and we shall be saved.—Ps. lxxx. 3.

THIS text is a prayer, and a declaration of faith.

1. A prayer. “ Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine.” We mourn our frequent turning away from our Best Beloved, and blend with our confessions the strong yearning to get near, *close* again. But it seems that it is always easier to fall down, than to right ourselves after a fall, and we long for His own strong grasp to lift us up, and turn our faces in the direction of His guiding eye. Here, then, is our desire, and it is the very same that our fellow-pilgrims in long past ages cherished with similar intensity. They could no more get back to a close and bright “ walk

with God," after having turned away their eyes to earthly things, than we can. They, too, must cry for help, for rescue, for *turning*; and their cry we echo now, "Turn us again, O God"! Perhaps we should not have found out that our eyes had been diverted from their upward looking, but for the lack of that "bright light" which used to make us glad even amid life's cloud and mist. And then we began to feel that our life no longer reflected the "light of God's countenance"; and a sense of barrenness in our own souls was made all the more painful by the thought that we were not bearing faithful witness in the world. Just such, it seems, was the experience of Old Testament saints, who expressed their need in the prayer, "Cause Thy face to shine." God's face is always shining, so that cannot mean that any change should take place in His aspect towards us; but so long as we were turning another way, the brightness could not rest *on us*. Hence the connection between the two petitions. "Place us, O God, in such a position that we may bask in Thy light, and reflect its lustre"!

2. A declaration of faith. "And we shall be saved,"—saved from the depths to which we had fallen; saved from the darkness we were losing everything (hope and joy, and peace) in; saved from the helpless infirmity of nature; saved from the dominion of self and sin!

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."—
GEN. xxii. 14.

Dear fellow-sufferer,

What wonderful scenes have been witnessed on mountain heights! what unheard of, unthought of glories revealed! what long perplexing mysteries cleared up!

It was among the peaks in Horeb, that Elijah learned how God had reserved unto Himself a band of faithful men to share the prophet's noble witness-bearing, and save him from the feeling of loneliness which had made him long for death.

It was on the Pisgah-peak of the mountains of Abarim, that Moses read the "sum" of all

those wilderness-wanderings which had so long tested and tried his confidence in God ; aye, and it was from that height also that he surveyed the better "Land of Rest," which they only can see "for whom it is prepared."

It was on the mount of transfiguration, that the three disciples received their heaven-taught lesson concerning the twofold nature of Jesus ; at once seeing Him clothed in Divine radiance, and hearing of His approaching suffering and death.

And it was on the mountains of Moriah, that Abraham learned the meaning of that severe trial, which has stood through all ages as a type of God's occasional dealings with His people, in testing their faith and exercising their love.

I take this incident, dear sufferer, as furnishing a most suitable theme for our meditation just now, and indeed always. We are called to endure much pain, and it disables us from profitably employing either thoughts or hands.

We sometimes ask inwardly, "to what purpose is all this?" for in the very nature of our ailments, there is a restlessness of body

which communicates itself even to the mind, and sadly mars the patience we wish to exemplify. Dissatisfied with its present results, we are, perhaps, almost ready to think the trial wasted upon us. "No, no," says the Bible, that cannot be; in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen that this chastening is only a test of your love and trust, and opens the way for a larger blessing than you have yet known. Let us try to believe this now, and ere long we shall climb the "mount of the Lord," and look backward on this our time of weary aching and simple enduring, with a strong light upon it. And from that "mount," too, we shall rise like Moses to a rest so sweet, as no earthly rest can ever be.

Yours lovingly,

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